

THE SANDMUTOPIAN

GUARDIAN

A Journal of BDSM Realities

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with FireCupping

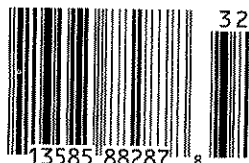
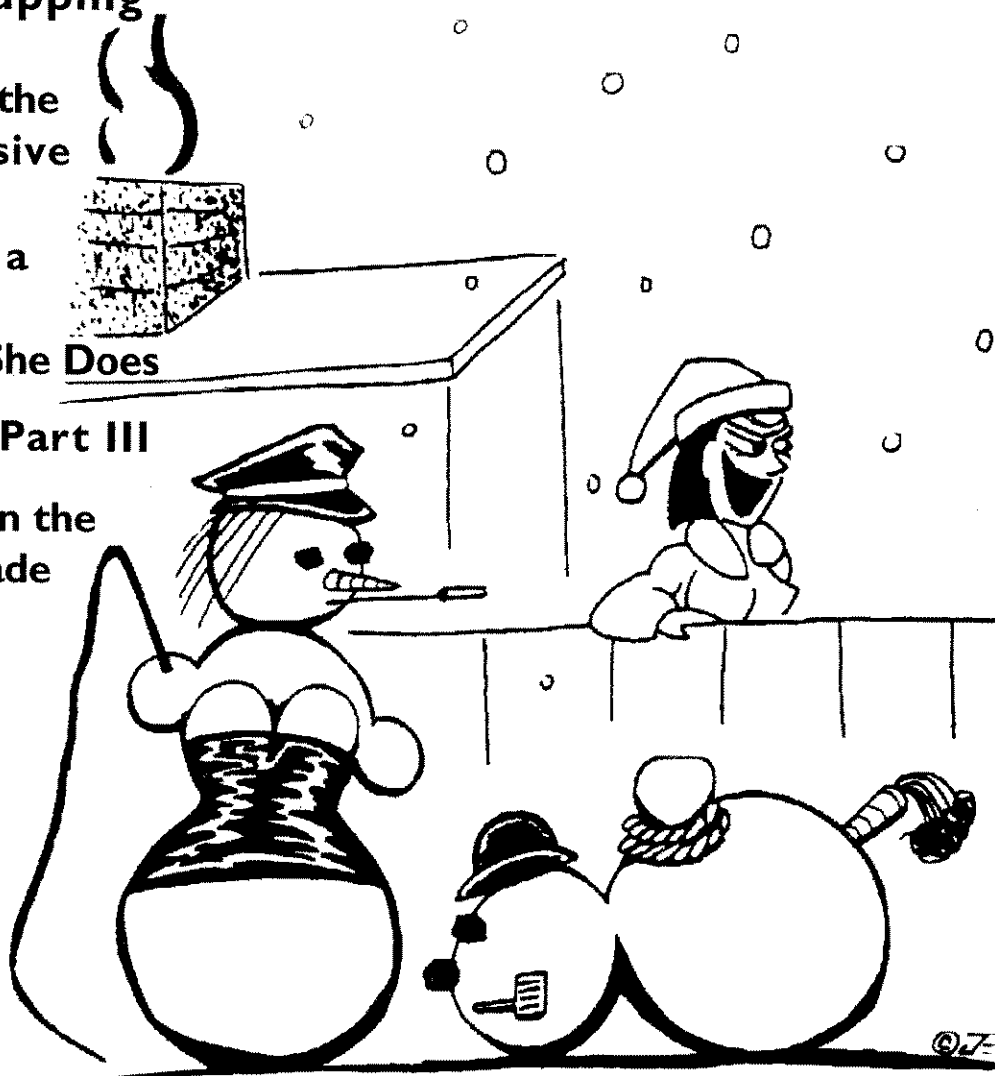
How to Tame the
Brat-Submissive

Cleo DuBois - a
Domina Who
Enjoys What She Does

Flagellation, Part III

Joseph Bean on the
Marquis De Sade

Plus ...
S/Mart Shopper
Book Reviews ...
and more.



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"Honey, the Henderson's are at it again!" This whimsical look at BDSM in suburbia comes to us from artist **Jay Moyes**.



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Best wishes to all our readers
for a Happy Luperclia, Feb. 15th.
Keep those whips and straps flying!
(See Issue #20 for more details on
how to celebrate this last of the SM holidays.)

Letters to **THE GUARDIAN** ~Our Readers' Forum

Send comments, queries or criticisms to: Editor, c/o The Utopian Network,
POB 1146, NY NY 10156
or Fax: (516) 842-7518 or email: siradam@ix.netcom.com
Please include name and address which will be held confidential.

Dollars for Domes

Dear Gerrie and Mitch:

I was going to let my subscription lapse, but your article about "prostitution" in Bucks County, PA convinced me to sign up again. (See #31-Community Matters)

But first I sent \$1.00 as suggested with an unstamped return envelope for a receipt. (ed. note: "Mikey" asked that people send to the County Clerk to help pay her fine.) Later, I did in fact receive a receipt with a handwritten note warning not to send cash by mail! So, Bucks County got 68¢ from me, minus the personnel cost of processing the payment and making out the receipt.

BDSM will continue to be persecuted to the extent it is seen by the general population as a perversion, with information distributed primarily by barely-tolerated "adult" stores. It will be more accepted the more it is understood, with information available in more mainstream outlets. So, *The Guardian* and other similar publications are critically important.

I enjoy seeing (in no particular order of importance): how-to articles, reviews of scene products /books/music/videos/magazines; lists of Internet sites; news of legal events and club events. Keep up the good work.

John S.
DC

SS&C, the LLC & NLA

As a Master of a 24/7 slave, I am very concerned about abusive SM relationships, and about educating both our community and the "vanil-

la" world that there is a difference between SM and abuse. As Guy Baldwin notes in his article, (#30) the area of Master/slave relationships is often at the heart of this debate, as this is an area ripe for abuse.

I believe that your general position on SM and abuse has been well documented in various issues of *The Guardian*. In the 10th Anniversary Issue, however, you comment on the Jovanovic trial and couple that comment with what I believe is a reference to the recent statement disseminated by the Leather Leadership Conference, on SM and abuse. Both my slave and I are very concerned about the LLC's statement on differentiating SM from abuse. Based on your statement (p.56) we are not certain of your position on the LLC's policy.

The policy hinges on measuring the amount of control retained by each party in the SM relationship. It poses eleven questions to be used in assessing whether an SM relationship is abusive—and states that a "no" answer to any *one* question may indicate abuse. It is my belief that by their very nature, the questions place almost all Master/slave relationships in the category of "abusive" because a slave retains little to no control in such a relationship.

The LLC's intent is to place its "guidelines" in the hands of social workers and law enforcement officials. They are asking for the endorsement of various leather organizations. My concern is that if the LLC's policy is widely endorsed, Masters

and slaves, who often feel estranged from the leather community as a whole, will be even *more* isolated and even endangered.

My slave and I have been talking with the leaders of our local chapter of NLA in an attempt to clarify this policy so that it might be used for educational purposes, while not categorizing Master/ slave relationships as abusive.

Master Jim
TX

Ed Note: We have posted the LLC and NLA policy statements on our web.

Kudos

Dear Mitch and Gerrie:

I was thrilled to receive the latest issue of *The Guardian* in the mail, and even more thrilled after I read it from cover to cover. Issue #31 is clearly one of the best examples of what our community can produce in meaningful, useful, and informative articles (acutely punctuated with delectable cartoons) when there is a publication dedicated to meeting our kinky needs. I most enjoyed the articles on flogging and finding a house-boy, and my Captain found the article on "gracious queening" enlightening. I think many would agree that one of our community's most ferocious battles is against invisibility, both for those who are outside BDSM and want to understand it and for those who are compelled toward bdsm for whatever reason, yet don't know where to begin. *The Guardian* functions as a living manifestation of just how authentic, creative, and articulate (need I add "handy?") our

MORE LETTERS FROM OUR READERS ON THE ABUSE ISSUE ... AND A CORRECTION

community is and at the same time encourages a sense of sensual literacy. Congratulations on your success

Most sincerely, *s. benedick*
NY

Abuse?

The idea that the BDSM community has become, "a haven and refuge for thinly disguised abusers," is questionable. (See Issue #30, "Unintended Consequences," by Guy Baldwin) Certainly some people (particularly men) seem to use BDSM to recreate their vision of a "traditional" 19th century marriage, but I see no indication that the BDSM community has a larger percentage of abusers (or chauvinists) than the general population. The notion that the community would shelter these people is simply preposterous. We've all had SS&C, safewords, etc. shoved down our throats to the point we're choking on them! Anyone in the scene knows they don't have to tolerate abuse. Dungeon monitors and community busybodies are everywhere warning us about "dangerous" people. A dozen or so years ago, was talking to some twit on the phone who had determined from my partner's posts online that I was "abusing" her and believed he had the right and responsibility to *investigate* our relationship!

I find it very disturbing that Baldwin sees this as a heterosexual problem. This harkens back to lesbian-separatist rhetoric of 20-30 years ago — once we escape the evil, male-dominated, patriarchy, abuse, rape and domestic violence will disappear. This is simply not the case. The gay and lesbian community has had a very hard time facing up to domestic violence within their own

ranks and his article is further indication of that.

As for his solutions, as an educator, I'd have to say that more education never hurt anyone — but is he talking about education or indoctrination? Certainly much of the SS&C rhetoric falls in the latter category. Education in ethics would be good for everyone, but what are the "erotic ethics" he proposes?

Exactly what would the "crisis teams" do? Where does their authority come from? Who appoints them? And of course, who watches them? There are increasing reports of domestic violence perpetrated by community leaders. Would *these* be the people running the BDSM Purity Patrols?

Various BDSM groups have talked with shelters and met with limited success. As near as I can tell, if a BDSMer works at the shelter or similar organization, things go ok. Otherwise the BDSM educators are chased off with extreme prejudice.

Tell the cops? Is he insane? This is further proof that Californians live in a fantasy world. As long as consent is *not* a legal defense for what we do, any involvement with the police is dangerous — especially in social backwaters like Tennessee. Educating them seems likely to only make it easier for them to shut down our clubs, raid our parties, and seize our children. Did he miss the Houghton case?

Patterns of abuse? One of the real problems in the community these days is that what one person calls a heavy scene, another calls abuse. We had a problem with this at a party at our house. One of our

guests was wandering around complaining that her "consent had been violated," because she had witnessed two scenes *she* didn't approve of: heavy verbal humiliation and a blow-job. I've had this argument with various people before. Mild abuse is nearly indistinguishable from 24/7 BDSM play. Once the abuse is severe enough to be noticed and clearly not a result of a heavy scene (black eyes, broken arms), it is no longer a matter for the community, but for law enforcement.

The BDSM community faces the same problem with abuse that society at large does. The person *being abused* must seek help. We do not have the right to examine everyone's relationships and determine which are healthy and which are not. Once the person asks for help, then the community can help them move out, recommend a scene-friendly marriage counsellor, or whatever seems appropriate.

Steve
TN

Another "Atta Boy

Received *The Guardian* with enclosures; delighted we are! We'll be submitting both articles and photographs in the near future. (It) is a terrific magazine and we look forward to receiving each issue. It's especially useful now, as we're building our new dungeon! Best wishes,

Janice & Jack F
IL

Corrections:

The "typos" in Laura Antoniou's Letter in #31 were not hers. They crept in during production, and got by us.

We also seem to have scrambled the page numbers in the Contents. Whoops! Our apologies to all. <*G*>

MORE ON THE MARQUIS DE SADE

A perspective by Joseph Bean

Dear Mitch,

Your cover man for Issue #29, Donatien Alphonse François, le Marquis de Sade, has interested me for a long time, less as a symbol of erotic power than as a writer. Looking at him as a writer presents many problems. Taken together, they make the Marquis almost unapproachable. Polemic is not my intention. I want, at most, to suggest a way for people to set the problems aside and actually *experience* the writer.

The Plutarch Problem : refers to the difficulty in really reading an author for oneself whose biography has become trite, cliché and, moreover, has been used — as were the subjects of *Plutarch's Lives* — for the unrelated purposes of the biographer(s). Every possible cautionary and moral tale has been illustrated by, and tortured out of, the life and imagined life of Sade. So, modern readers pick up the *120 Days of Sodom* or *Justine* or any of Sade's works, already knowing things about the author which may or may not have any basis in fact. And, if the reader has been lucky enough to arrive unencumbered by these biographical "lessons," he or she is likely to be assaulted with them in the introduction to the edition at hand. More important, the reader comes to the books already knowing the supposed relevance of facts which, apart from often being false, are even more frequently *irrelevant*!

The Machiavelli Problem : refers to the difficulty in reading as fresh the work of a writer whose work has been, to put it mildly, pigeonholed. Like Machiavelli's, the works of Sade

are stuffed into mutually exclusive pigeonholes by two different camps of critics, but each reader is likely to have been exposed to one opinion or the other or, worse, out of an effort to be fair, to have come to the conclusion that some combination of the standard determinations is the truth. With Machiavelli, it is argued that he is either an evil monster instructing a Prince (and, by extension, all rulers), or he is a clever satirist warning the people about the monstrous deeds they may expect of evil rulers. Similarly, Sade is thought

I became aware of (Sade)
via an offhand comment
made by an adult leatherman
I met while I was
in tenth grade.

to be a debauched hedonist seducing his readers, or a satirical commentator on a false and immoral age. Because generally we have a better understanding of the possibilities with regard to Machiavelli, it may help to translate the thinking into Sade... but carefully!

The Stein Problem : refers to the difficulty of reading a writer whose ideas, techniques and styles are, to say the least, foreign to *all* readers and, perhaps strangely, also foreign to most scholars who claim a familiarity with them. Gertrude Stein was possibly the first *unread* writer to become famous. As she was well aware, she was widely collected, but not much read in her lifetime, a syndrome which no doubt continues to this day. The same syndrome has



kept
Sade in
print for gen-

erations. Collectors, not readers, have made early editions of Sade priceless. And, sadly, collectors have done more to "explain" Sade than genuine and concerned readers. That is to say, many essays and articles and even whole books about Sade betray a half-knowledge or less of his actual writing. Often they convey instead a fairly extensive familiarity with the earlier works of his many critics and few proponents and they dwell at perplexing length on the physical books and their preservation.

The Sanskrit Problem : is the distancing effect of reading a writer always and only in translation. Even though he lived centuries after Shakespeare, the cultural context of Sade is hardly more familiar to a modern reader in France than Elizabethan England is to modern Britons. We who read Sade in English are twice as removed from direct understanding of his work — no, really many times — and this effect is multiplied by the pressures of the other Problems.

I don't claim any special insight or secret access to the work and ideas of Sade, but I have been very lucky. I became aware of him via an offhand comment made by an adult leatherman I met while I was in tenth grade. This was before I knew who other people said he was, of course. I first read *120 Days of Sodom* in French with two transla-

tions in English and a very understanding French teacher to help me with the reading, Miss Vivian Crawford. Naturally, she was concerned with my grasp of the language and completely unconcerned about (but, I think, not unaware of) the rest of it. What I found was unlike what I have since heard described by purported scholars of Sade's writing (who are usually biographers in readers' guises). I found the writing dense but elegant. The tale-telling was slow (as was the fashion of the time) but not sluggish or burdened with tedious and pointless paragraphs of florid text (as is so much writing in 18th Century English). I found that his cause, if any, was better deduced and more positively supported in the book if it were called "liberty" rather than "libertinism." I found myself seduced into the world of the writer

— surely a "crime" of which every novelist wishes to be guilty — but never for a moment did I imagine that he was prescribing the illness(es) of his characters as an antidote for the ills of either the world or the reader.

If there is a metaphoric thread in the content of Sade, I would guess that it is not at all deeply buried. To dig for it would be like digging to the depths of oil in search of potatoes. He seems not much concerned with metaphor, but (consciously or not) he may have drawn his fictional household — especially in *Justine* as a microcosm of a world he would very reasonably have considered unwell. If so, it was a reflection that could no more be resisted than a mirror could refuse to reflect the foam-covered face that is pushed toward it in the morning.

I am well-aware that the shelves

of libraries and bookstores are bulging with translations and commentaries on Sade, and I know that they are becoming heavy with biographical interpretations too. Nonetheless, I think that what his name and reputation need most is a series of translations made by some fresh, unaffected mind ... like the one with which I approached *120 Days of Sodom* long ago. I hardly recognize Sade in the books about him and feel more assaulted than assisted by most translations. In the absence of the "needed" new translations, I recommend careful reading and an intentional disregard for the opinions expressed in the introductions to Sade's works and in other books about him, including the famous and recent biographies. ♦

(Joseph Bean heads the *Leather Archives & Museum* in Chicago, and is a scholar of BDSM in literature.)

From the Publishers

Our Man (of the Year) Flynt!

Hustler magazine's publisher, Larry Flynt, became "one of ours" this year. His new publication, *Taboo*, a slick, commercial product featuring silicone boobs-in-bondage and pretty models peeing into champagne glasses, by itself hardly qualifies the "Sultan of Sleaze" for Leather Siblinghood — even if he did use excerpts from Jay Wiseman's *SM101* in the first few issues. Nor does his underdog's perceptions of sexual class struggle necessarily endear him to every kink-lover ... especially those of Rhetorical Feminist political leanings — which we at *The Guardian* tend to be. And it wasn't the very classy box of homemade-style baked goods that his office sent us as a Thank You for advertising in *Taboo* that won our grateful admiration.

No. It is for outstanding performance in



whuppin' hypocrite butt that makes Mr. Flynt rise above his Velvet-Painting-of-Elvis cultural roots and emerge as a champion of Sexual Outlaws — including *us*!

Ken Starr took four years and more than forty million taxpayer dollars to prove that Bill Clinton soiled a dress and misused a cigar — and plunged the nation into a nasty partisan posturing party that isn't over yet. Starr still couldn't make the Prez say "Uncle" ... or anything amounting to more than, "Whoops ... see y'all in court."

By contrast, Larry Flynt's retaliatory million-dollar bounty on Republican Fornicators brought House Speaker-elect Bob Livingston down just as fast and clean as a hillbilly baggin' a buck out of season! From start to finish, Flynt's hunting trip took roughly one fiftieth of the time and money of Ken Starr's expedition of discovery.

Not too shabby for a porn-peddling, out-of-the-mainstream, recovering drug addict in a wheel-chair. Ain't that so?

Gerrie and Mitch

Flogging~Part III

Position isn't everything, but ...

Third in the series

**by Mitch Kessler
aka Adam Selene**

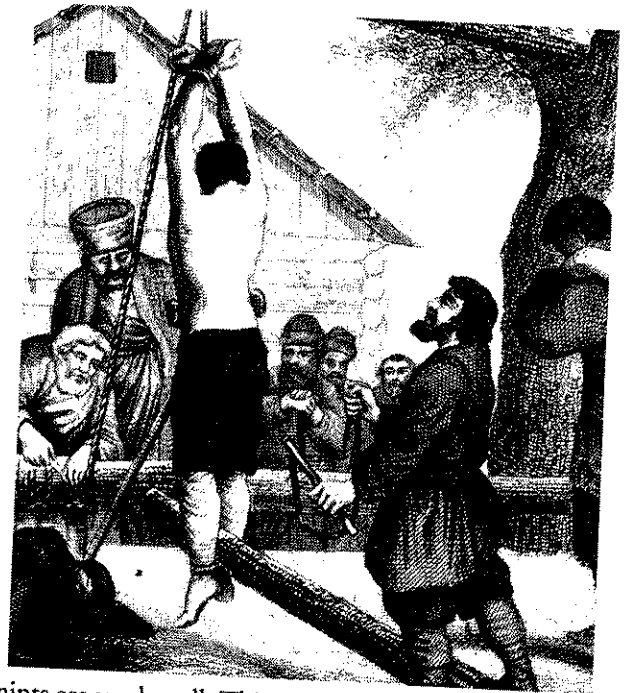
I'm an advocate of firm frontal support for the flog-ee. The "suspended, hands overhead position" looks really hot — but it requires either that the flog-ee expend a lot of energy just to keep from being knocked out of position, or that the flog-er use gentle strokes and/or low-mass hitting implements ... which generally hurt more.

Safety and satisfaction both suggest that the flog-ee be should be firmly braced against the blows. This can be accomplished in either a standing or pronated position. It is well to keep in mind that when the body is parallel to the ground, the flog-er is striking downward, assisted by gravity. This can increase the force of the impact to the point that the blow interferes with the flog-ee's opportunities to inhale. To a point, reduced oxygen in the blood can be euphoric and pleasurable ... but only to a point.

RESTRAINT

Restraint is largely a matter of personal choice. In judicial punishment flogging, naturally, the restraint was largely for the protection of the flog-er and witnesses. The exception to this is the neck collar, which was seldom secured to anything. Its purpose was to protect the victim from a broken neck or crushed windpipe. In sensual flogging, straps, cuffs and bindings may add to the psychological effect for either or both parties, or may contribute to the comfort and safety of the flog-ee. Many people say that they prefer to be securely bound when being flogged, because it relieves them of the responsibility for "holding position," while reinforcing the psychological elements of helplessness and inevitability."

Others favor "Honor Bondage" ... so-called because the Bottom makes it a Point of Honor to hold position while submitting to intense pleasure -- no mechanical



restraints are used at all. This approach provides the Top a good measure of assurance that the flogging does not exceed the Bottom's capacity or consent ... while it guarantees the Bottom a swift and sure way of showing the Top that limits have been exceeded -- walking away. (Some Bottoms will "save face" for both themselves and their partners by pretending to swoon — which is not quite the same thing as "faking a faint.")

There are people who like to "hang in their cuffs" that is, they stop supporting their weight with their legs and are held upright by their restraints alone. If this is anticipated, it is advisable to limit the amount of time the shoulder joints are subjected to both impact and pulling stresses ... or to relieve the weight on the arms by the use of waist or leg straps.

The padding or lining of cuffs is another area to think about. Fleece lining was intended to prevent friction chafing when violent or delirious patients were restrained for

long periods. Smooth leather actually holds wrists more securely, and particularly if soft and padded, is just as skin-friendly over shorter periods (less than two hours). The important thing is to avoid sharp, hard edges as are found on metal handcuffs, or cuffs with square-cut edges ... and to be sure the cuffs fit snugly enough to hold, but not so tight as to restrict circulation. If the arms are fixed overhead, the heart has a harder job pumping the blood to the fingertips, regardless of pressure on the wrists.

The flog-er (or an assistant) should check for signs of excessive tightness or duration, at least every 15 minutes or so. If the flog-er feels the flog-ee's fingers at the very beginning, an occasional afterwards will show if the fingers are cooling as time passes. This is an early warning sign. To confirm whether or not circulation is being obstructed, press down on any of the fingernails so that it "turns white," then release the pressure. (This is surprisingly non-intrusive, an may hardly be noticed by the flog-ee) If the the fingertip appears blue-ish, and/or the nail does not return to its natural pink color quickly, it is time to start thinking about lowering the arms, releasing the cuffs, or at least asking the flog-ee how their hands feel. In theory, nerve and soft tissue damage can result from neglecting this. In practice, assuming a flog-ee in moderately fit cardiovascular condition, free of circulatory or blood oxygenation problems, as may occur with diabetes and asthma, and assuming the restraints are not sharp edged handcuffs or shackles -- it is hard to do any lasting harm in less than an hour. However, in addition to the overall value of a "better safe than sorry" caution ... the occasional checking reinforces the psychic/spiritual connection between both parties -- and imparts a sense of caring and security promoting good interpersonal feelings between them. It helps to show you care. It feels good to know you're cared about. Along the same line, it is not a bad thing if the flog-ee can tell the flog-er if their hands feel cold or numb ... particularly if this can be done without disturbing the power dynamics, or sensual/erotic impact of the flogging.

FORM

Compared to hitting a golf ball or throwing a single tail whip, the mechanics of flogging — the form and technique — are not as important as sensitivity and self control. The single important skill is making the tips of the tresses hit the body where, when, and as hard as is intended. A certain number of practice sessions with an inanimate target is still necessary. The practice target should be

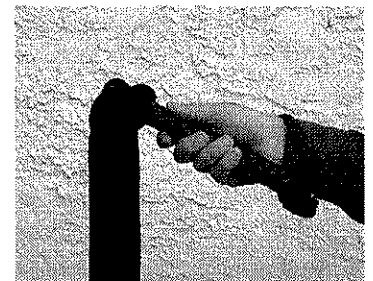
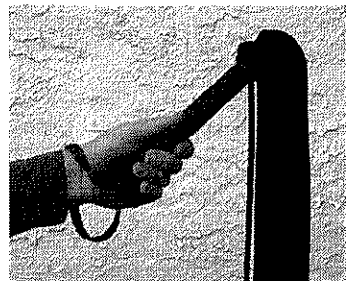


smooth and resilient, it should also let you know where your stokes land. A generously sized plush cushion fastened to a wall would be about ideal. Backs of furniture are not good targets even if well padded, because the narrow edges invite a "wrap" of the tresses. This subjects both the tress and its attachment into the handle to more stress than they are probably designed for.

"Shadow Boxing," practicing in empty air, is almost equally valuable to target practice." It develops balance and rhythm and builds the aerobic conditioning and muscular stamina that prolonged flogging demands of the flog-er.

STANCE

There is no one right way to stand; however there is a distinct stylistic and functional difference between the form of a sensual flog-er and a punitive one. The sensual flog-er plants her/his feet and holds the body in a relaxed, but well-aligned posture. This promotes accuracy by providing a steady platform for the arms and shoulders which do all the actual work. The punitive flog-er uses as much of the body as skill permits, to put as much energy as possible behind a countable number of powerful strokes. By contrast, the sensual flogger will be throwing a great number of lighter strokes, with greater precision of timing as well as position. In general, the feet should be about as far apart as the shoulders are wide, knees slightly bent, with the weight on the balls of the feet and centered over your hips. In other words, assume a generic, comfortable athletic posture, neither slouching nor leaning.



GRIP

Most flog-ers use one of two grips, and will rarely switch to the other. The one I use is based on the way a single tail is held with the butt of the whip in the palm of the

continued on pg 10

Flogging Part III

continued from pg 11

hand. Others are equally comfortable and flexible with the flogger grasped somewhere in the middle of the handle. One benefit of this grip is that it makes the best use of a counter-weighted handle to reduce the requirement for a strong wrist. The other grip makes using the fingers for control a little easier. The second grip favors smaller hands and thicker flogger handles, but neither grip is clearly better than the other in an absolute sense. You'll probably wind up using, and choosing equipment for, the first grip you practice with.

STROKE AND SWING

The Mistress Twirl

This move is a light, fast, circular movement ... much like beating eggs with a fork. After a while, the tresses of the flogger may begin to "wind up"; they become twisted at the point the tress bundle joins the handle. There are floggers designed with swivels especially for this problem, but most flog-ers simply allow the handle to rotate slightly in their hands with each rotation. It sounds like an invitation to launch the toy into space, but after a little practice a secure twirling grip becomes quite automatic. In fact, the periodic relaxation of the fingers may actually prevent wrist fatigue. It is a common warming up stroke for the very beginning of a flogging, and it can be used to "mark time" allowing the flog-ee to recover composure or resolution. The idea is to spin the tress tips in a circle, perpendicular to the ground. Moving in one direction it strikes downward, and is very suitable for working on the shoulders and back. The other direction strikes upward, and is a good way of getting at the "sweet spot" under the tuck of the butt, and the inner thighs, while avoiding the sensitive sciatic saddle.

Figure Eight

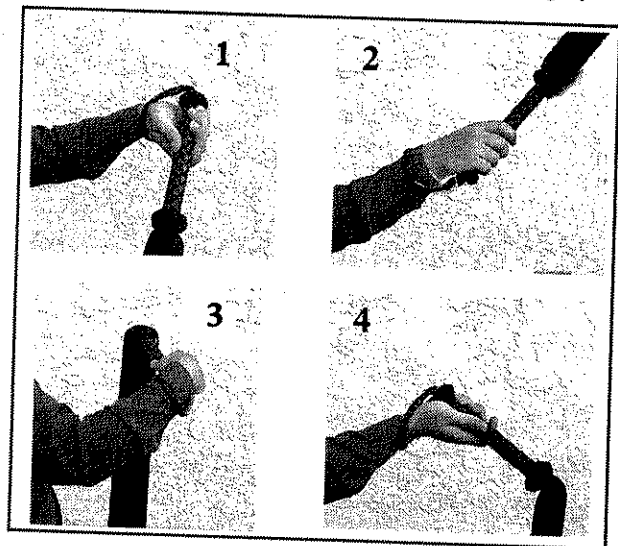
This is the main stroke used in modern sensual flogging. As the name suggests the tress bundle is describing a figure-eight pattern in the air. Actually the figure eight is lying on its side, wider than it is tall, so the stroke might better be called the "infinity stroke" ... if the term didn't remind us of eternity and cerebrovascular accidents -- not sexy topics at all for the older devotee. This stroke helps establish and hold a steady pattern, pace and rhythm. For each flogger (sometimes called a "flail") there is a range of speeds ... tress velocity ... that the design will do almost without effort. Attempting to move the flogger faster than this takes immensely more energy, while going slower caus-

es the tress bundle to separate into a "cloud" of leather. Once established, altering the pattern takes some conscious effort, especially if strongly rhythmic music is playing in the background. From the flog-ee's point of view, this is not entirely a bad thing.

The figure eight is most easily used for left to right (flogging) strokes and strokes that travel diagonally from a higher to a lower plane. This makes it a good choice for flogging the shoulders and upper back, quite thoroughly. On the butt, the figure eight does its best work striking alternately to each side of the "bunn." Many people seem to find an "upward" figure eight uncomfortable, tiring and unnatural ... but with practice the appropriate muscle groups and skills develop quickly. This stroke is also used in a 4-point pattern, striking first each shoulder in turn then descending to hit each butt cheek, then rising again to hit the shoulders and back.

Fatigue

In time any pattern becomes fatiguing to the muscles creating it. Changing pace or changing pattern helps the flog-ers arm, but may not help the flog-ee's concentration. If fatigue sets in, but the flog-er wants to maintain the pace and pattern, the trick is to shift the work to different muscle groups. The "8" can be formed entirely with the wrist to start, then the forearm muscle groups can take over, yielding in turn to the upper arm muscle. In each case, the other two sets of muscles neither freeze nor go limp, but follow the working group in a relaxed, minimum effort kind of way. When the upper arm comes into play, it is



necessary to allow the elbow to bend at each "circle" and straighten it again to land each stroke.

As the figure 8 motion is increased, the implement begins to move in a more vertical plane, passing the flog-

ers body, alternating front and back. This evolves into something like the "moline" in saber-fencing, which develops a great deal of both speed and force in the stroke. However this move also serves as a method of delivering a very gentle and sensual stroke. If the *moline* is slowed to the point that the tress bundle uses all of the force of the swing to reach the apex of its arc, the tresses spread and fall over the flog-ees back in a soft trickle of thongs called **The Cascade**. Introducing cascades among more powerful strokes can be very disconcerting to the flog-ee ... which is also not always entirely a bad thing. *(Although this move has probably been developed by a great many flog-ers, independently, it was first fully described in print by Jay Marston, the great West Coast braider and whipmaker. See issue #7 of The Guardian)*

The Side Stroke

In punitive flogging with a Cat, the flog-er generally stood halfway to the side of the victim, working one side of the body at a time and walking to the other side to strike symmetrically. Sometimes left- and right-handed beacles worked together to reduce fatigue and achieve parity between the left and right wings of the beating. In sensual flogging, however, the object of the **Side Stroke** is to deliver a great deal of "thump" spread across as wide a target as possible. The flog-er stands almost alongside the flog-ee, at whip's length. The elbow bends, drawing the tress bundle into the air in a horizontal plane, in preparation for the stroke. It straightens as the arm propels the tress bundle forward parallel to the ground. The whole front portion (1/3 to 1/2 the length) of the tress bundle lands across both shoulder blades, or butt cheeks at the same time. With practice the stroke can be made hard and fast, or slow and gentle. This is the blow you do not want to land in the small of the back or on the kidney areas. Hard or soft, the Side Stroke lends itself to a slow, deliberate pace, with no particular rhythm.

Sky to Ground - The Claw

This is almost the side stroke turned 90 degrees, except that the flog-er stands directly behind the flog-ee. The tress bundle is "lofted" into the air over and behind the flog-er's head and then "pulled" downward in what can be an extremely powerful stroke. Precise aim is very important. To hit solidly the tips of the tresses should fall just an inch or two "inside" the plane of the target surface. If the tips can be made to just barely brush the surface of the shoulder, or the bulge of the butt, the name given the

stroke, **The Claw**, explains its effect -- especially if the flog-er has a sparse bundle of thin, dense tails.

The Wrap

It is very easy to over-reach this stroke, striking over the top of the shoulder, producing a "wrap" to the collar bone area or upper chest. This is an ultra-ouchie bruise-maker. Usually it is a moment when the flog-er will want to find a way to acknowledge the mistake, and give the flog-ee time to recover.

The Whip-Crack

A Whip-Crack stroke is like a Sky to Ground, on a 45 degree angle to the ground. For a right-handed flog-er the tress bundle starts low on the right side of the body. It is lofted up and to the left of the flog-er's head. The stroke is "pulled" forward and down moving back toward the right side. As the tip tress bundle passes the flog-ers left ear, the arm straightens, and the wrist "follows through" introducing a "hairpin bend" about halfway down the tress bundle. As the arm and body follow through, the tips straighten out, pounding into the target, or brushing it with greatly increased speed and impact. This blow can be a good scene ender as well.

The Scene Ender

Usually avoided, if possible, wraps have their useful purposes, too. It happens sometimes that the flog-ee is enjoying the proceedings so much that she/he doesn't notice (or choose to notice) crimson skin or blue bruises forming on his/her body. The flog-er begins to expect a safeword that doesn't come. This is a judgment call and either decision could be quite disastrously wrong -- from the point of view of the relationship between the partners. In the balance between wimpiness and brutality, softness is more easily corrected. However, there are flog-ees who want to be "broken" ... forced to quit -- and they always seem to be the ones whose plateau tolerance is already verging on the heroic. One option is to switch to another implement, perhaps a particularly nasty Cat. But it is hard to do this without "telegraphing" the move, even to a blindfolded, away-facing flog-ee. Two "wraps" in quick succession, one to each shoulder may be just the thing to return the flog-ee to the recollection of his/her own mortality and limit -- in an illuminating flash of searing agony! (Just like a stubbed toe, but larger and in a different

continued on pg 12

Flogging, III

continued from pg 13

place.) It may also be just the thing to never ever do again! You never can tell.

FLOGGING FLORENTINE

The European style of fighting with two swords is attributed to the Maestros of the Renaissance City State of Florence, although it may have actually originated in the Renaissance "Faires" of the past two decades. The Florentine style of flogging, however, owes more to Asian stick and short-sword fighting forms, particularly the twirling, overlapping style of the "moon stick" or "nunchucku" featured in almost every martial arts movie. The advantages to this style are 1) it is extremely impressive to watch, 2) it divides the work between two arms, greatly increasing stamina, 3) it allows (nearly) twice as many blows to be launched in the same time, making it well suited for light, fast continuous flogging. Its drawbacks include: 1) It requires much practicing, 2) even the well-and-truly practiced often get their tails tangled, 3) while thinking about not tangling the tails of the flogger, the flog-er may not be paying enough attention to the tail of the flog-ee.

Personally, I don't have the coordination required to do well with this style. What I can say from observation is that Florentinos use the same "figure eight" strokes as one-handed flog-ers, but do so with two hands simultaneously. Some, but not all, use matched pairs of floggers. The key to success is to move both hands in the same pattern at the same speed. Admittedly this is like saying, "winning foot races is a matter of taking longer steps faster," ... but both statements are fundamentally true ... more instructive than the other applicable advice: "Practice!" -- but not much practical help.

An in-expert but reliable method of faking a Florentine Flogging is to use two floggers whose overall length is about four inches less than the flog-er's sleeve dimension. The stroke is the circular Mistress Twirl, but with the hands held in front of the body, and cycling 180 degrees apart. The tress tips pass in front of the flog-er's

body, circling in a vertical plane. From the flog-ee's point of view it is much the same thing ... even better, since the flog-er rarely tangles the floggers or the wrists, spoiling the rhythm

FLOGGING IN PUBLIC

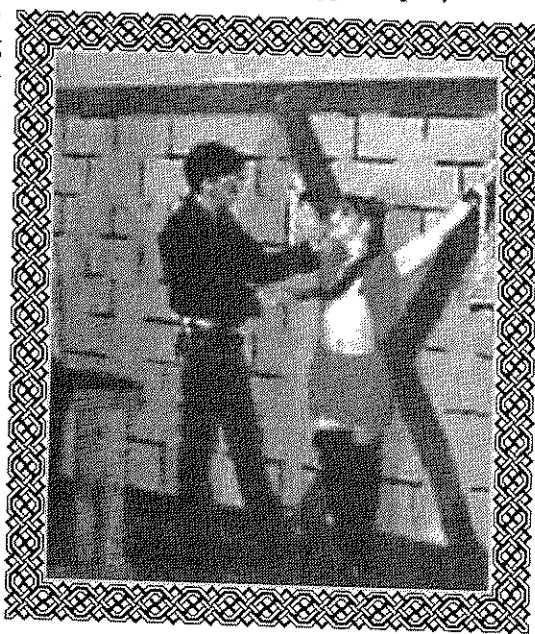
Public floggings were once a popular Sunday entertainment. Men and women displayed roughly equal enthusiasm for seeing justice done in this way ... although some clerics expressed concern that masculine interest in public order increased when the malefactors were young prostitutes -- but diminished when the victim was an elderly beggar or petty thief. They felt the instructive elements of

the spectacle were de-emphasized in the former case and insufficiently appreciated in the latter. When the authorities at last came to realize that people of *all* ranks enjoyed watching others flogged every bit as much as the magistrates did, flogging was taken inside the walls of the prison where only a few were privileged to enjoy it.

A century later, with the decline of "Swing Clubs," the surviving proprietors needed an attraction to bring customers into these otherwise decor- and alcohol-free establishments. Fetishistic SadoMasochism seemed to be a

good draw ... and not surprisingly the S/M people brought their fondness for flogging along with them. Since these floggings often provided the spectacle of a naked writhing woman ... without the expense of hiring a trained dancer, the practice was encouraged by Club owners. The money they saved by not hiring dancers, was invested in loud sound systems (so the flog-ees ouches could not be heard!) and red-colored lights (so that any skin changes would be inoffensively invisible).

In time it became clear that Public Scenes (some say "Public Scene-ing," much to the chagrin of the lexicographically inclined) presented advantages to the flogging devotees themselves. The visually and hearing challenged among them were in no way inconvenienced by the lighting and music arrangements. They continued to use kineshetics, their sense of touch, and good luck to accomplish their ends -- while others adapted in a variety of ingenious ways including miner's lanterns and radio-headsets.



Flogging is not unlike oral sex: Anyone can be good at it if they persevere

Still, the advantages of there being "enough room to swing a cat," good solid spanking benches and flogging frames were attractive, so play parties and party houses proliferated in addition to commercial clubs. There were also two other especially powerful inducements to public play. One was to let people with no other performing arts ability show off and be admired by strangers. The other was that public play was felt to be much safer for the submissive since whatever took place would happen in front of a great many potential witnesses — and even rescuers.

However, Public Play does introduce an additional level of decision-making for both flog-er and flog-ee. They must determine and concentrate on for whose benefit the flogging is being done. In private, the options are "—er, —ee, or both" — in public "the audience" becomes a consideration. Any actor will tell you a live audience does make a difference. In most public venues "the crowd" seems to have learned *not* to cheer the flog-er on with cries of "Hit Harder." — not that anyone actually obeyed those urgings. But conversely, an absence of audience reaction may tempt the active partner to "try harder" to gain the crowd's approval. The receptive partner may take more than intended, to "make the Top look good" ... or to impress the audience on his or her own behalf.

There are additional challenges for public players including:

People who talk about computers or scene politics within earshot of one or both players

People who talk about the Top's performance and/or the Bottom's ability to "take it" within earshot of both players — and the closest three counties!

People who walk between the flog-er and the flog-ee while the implement is in motion.

Music over which *nothing*, especially a safeword, can be heard.

Lighting in which *nothing*, especially a cut or bruise can be seen.

Flogging frames and crosses which wobble in the breeze -- or even in a dead flat calm.

Nonetheless, in spite of the challenges, Public Play offers an unmatched opportunity to learn by observation ... not only the techniques and equipment employed by the Top, but also the effect they have on the Bottom — and the "after-taste" the combined choices leave the observer with.

Not everyone will have the desire, let alone the opportunity to watch others at play. Fortunately, practice and a partner's feedback are the best teachers.

Flogging is not unlike oral sex: Anyone can be good at it if they persevere ... introduce variations while remaining aware of their partner's reactions -- and keep what works, while abandoning the rest. ♦

(Mitch Kessler [aka Adam Selene] has been making and using floggers for more than 10 years. People will still drive long distances to be flogged by him, using floggers of his own design. For parts I and II of Flogging, see issues #30/31. As Editor of The Guardian, he welcomes comments and questions.)

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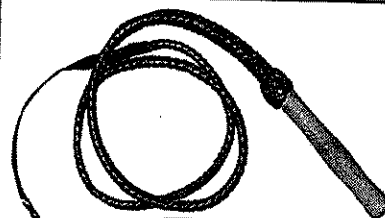
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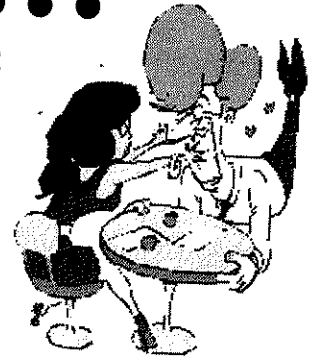
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Brat Submissives - What, When, Why?

by Miss Nikki

Brat (n): a child, especially an impudent or unruly one; scornful or playful term.

The Brat Submissive isn't a new idea brought about by the "SS&C New Guard Brigade," but the advent of Internet chat rooms seems to have put those who would act this way in the spotlight. Although child or childish wouldn't be my first choice of term when making an attempt to define the D/s Brat, in many cases the behavior exhibited is similar.



How does one deal with this mentality as a dominant? There are as many answers to that question as there are combinations of personalities, in and out of relationships. Some would say that a Brat is nothing more than a "do me" bottom hoping to entice or coerce a dominant into giving him/her a desired physical repercussion for irritating behavior. Others believe this personality type simply needs firm control to curb the impudence. I think it depends on the individual.

sought. The reason could be as "simple" as the individuals not really being suited for one another and this possibility should be closely examined.

It's an integral part of the person's personality to be cocky/feisty.

... habits are often easily developed, but can be difficult to break

This type of submissive would be happier with a dominant who enjoys a feisty partner.

He or she simply *likes* to play the brat because it's fun.

This can also relate to the submissive who acts out for the attention. If those are the dynamics of your relationship, then you need to be certain your partner knows when such conduct is *not* permissible.

Possible Reasons/ Solutions For Brattish Behavior

The submissive feels s/he hasn't been getting enough attention and has discovered, either on a conscious or subconscious level that being cutesy or annoying sometimes gets the desired result.

This is a poor behavior to encourage, whether in a submissive, child or animal, if such is not the nature of your relationship with the submissive. Sometimes just sitting down and having a long talk will bring the reason for the behavior to light. If talking doesn't curb the attitude in the future, there are numerous ways to correct the problem without giving him/her the impression that they managed to control your response.

Related to the above: Something in the relationship needs "fixing" and this is his/her way of communicating that information.

Whenever something in a relationship varies greatly from "normal" behavior, the underlying cause needs to be

The submissive doesn't know any better and thinks that's just the way one gets the attention of a dominant.

Education and open, caring communication should solve this over time. Remember that habits are often easily developed but can be difficult to break completely. Dealing with this kind of submissive I would expect occasional back sliding but would also let them know there would be repercussions.

S/he has reached the desperate point in the search for a partner and his/her worst behavior slips out.

Patience is the key here if you think the submissive and yourself might be compatible. Patience and education. It's human nature to, all too often, act in a foolish manner out of sheer desperation. This is not an excuse for inconsiderate behavior, only a reason, and whether a given dominant chooses to take the time to get to know the submissive is purely a personal decision.

Within a relationship, the submissive may feel they've done something wrong, a thing the dominant may either not be aware of or may not have found to be a problem. Yet s/he still desires the catharsis, the purging, that can come from a disciplinary response on the part of their dominant.

If your submissive feels s/he can't discuss a problem with you, I advise you to take a look at your communication structure. If everything in that part of your relationship is normally fine, then initiating a conversation when you are not "actively" in your d/s role may work. Learn what your partner perceives is a problem and discuss it. Be aware that s/he may well still feel a need for a purging of some sort. I've found that an intense physical session will often leave the submissive feeling the air has been cleared.

The D in BDSM is for discipline. For some it's a hot game that leads to hotter sex, for others it's an integral part of their relationship and for still other people it's somewhere in between. When submissives acquiesce to behavioral correction they are extending a large measure of trust that the dominant won't abuse or harm them. If the nature of the relationship is such that certain actions or conduct is unacceptable to the continuation of a happy, healthy power exchange relationship corrective measures are not only appropriate, they're anticipated with trepidation. Should the dominant back down from promised discipline a degree of respect may be lost. If repercussions are promised, follow-through is necessary.

Play punishment can be a highly enjoyable form of role playing when all involved are aware that it isn't serious disciplinary correction. However when you're working with a submissive and certain behaviors need to be modified or at least curbed, it helps to have a back up arsenal of things that s/he wouldn't actually enjoy on a "this is fun" level. Spanking an erotic masochist, for example, even while expressing extreme disapproval, is less likely to have the desired effect. They need to have the lesson given in a manner that causes it to sink into their subconscious as an "I do *not* want to have to do (or go through) this ever again".

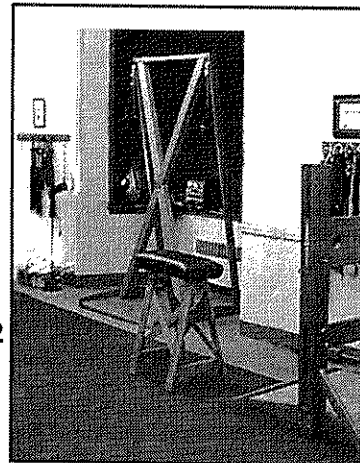
How Not To Reward Bad Boys and Girls

One thing that works well for me is having the submissive fill out a BDSM Checklist [<http://www.prrcat.com/achklist.htm>]. Many kinky activities are listed on this and the person filling it out indicates their level of

continued on pg 16

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Brats

continued from pg 15

desire to experience (or do, if the dominant) that activity or action on a NO to 5 scale. I have effectively used items that were listed as a "1", indicating little desire to do, as corrective measures. Here are some other (mostly) "non-pain" suggestions, applicable only if the activity is something *not* enjoyed by the submissive:

Freeze the submissive's secretions (ejaculate for men, "juices" for women) in an ice cube tray and use them in their favorite beverage. The mental/emotional effect of this, especially if done when you have house guests, is impressive. Alternately, you have him/her just suck on the ice cube, possibly while performing an unpleasant task.

Stand the submissive in a corner for a specific period of time in an uncomfortable position and do not permit movement. Variations on this include, but are not limited to:

Holding arms out to either side, nose pressed against the wall. Put lube or oil on their hands and/or arms so you will be able to tell if they tried to rest them against the wall.

Same as above but put a coin between their nose and wall, coins on the backs of both outstretched hands, one on their head and another between their ankles. You could also stand them on a sprinkling of flour to see if they shifted around.

Use a timer and each time they move or shift around, add 30 seconds or a minute.

Assign an unpleasant task :

Clean out the toilet or a cat's litterbox with a toothbrush.

Cut the grass on hands and knees with hand shears like what is used to trim back roses. (Please be aware of potential problems like stinging or biting insects, sunburn

if s/he's nude, etc.)

Cleaning all the mini blinds (Venetian blinds) and/or ceiling fans in the house with a cotton ball or pad.

Assign a tedious or repetitious task :

A favorite of many of my friends is requiring lines be written. Imagine the writer's cramp after have to neatly hand write or print, "I will not attempt to correct my Mistress/ Master in public ever again" 50 or more times.

Same as above only provide three or more colors of ink and each line must be a different color. Or each word. Or even each letter if the error was particularly offensive.

Kneeling on rice without movement for a predetermined amount of time.

Most submissives find being "ignored" or otherwise deprived of their dominant's attention the worst punishment next to ending the relationship.

Put him/her in a dog cage barely large enough to contain their body in a kneeling or crouching position for a set time — then go about your business.

Shut the submissive in a closet (not recommended for claustrophobes) while entertaining company.

At a play party, tie them in an out of the way place but where they can still watch some scenes, then circulate and enjoy yourself (or at least give the appearance of doing so)

Same as above only hang a sign around his/her neck that briefly describes the reason for and nature of the discipline. Encourage people to go read the sign.

One final note: It's important to always keep yourself apprised of the submissive's condition — mental, emotional and physical. If you're going to be out of sight, I advise making certain s/he can escape any bondage or restraints in case of any emergency. (e.g. a house fire, raid of the party, problem breathing or someone breaking into the room or house) Even the most annoying of submissives wouldn't be yours if you hadn't seen something of value in them, so when disciplining for real or even as play keep this in mind. ❖

(Miss Nikki, aka Nikki ^cat^ and ^cat^, in the "cyber community," is a formerly submissive, now lifestyle and professional dominatrix in the New Orleans, area. She created and maintains ^cat^'s House and Dungeon [<http://www.prrcat.com>], Miss Nikki's Chambers and Mistress Cat's Chamber of Domination [<http://chamber.prrcat.com>], and manages a moderated email list, Dungeon-ISO, for those seeking partners and friends in the BDSM lifestyle. Miss Nikki welcomes intelligent and intelligible email addressed to: cat@prrcat.com or prrcat@earthlink.net)



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The Keeper and The Brat

Julie is a Brat, a fact that is well known by her Keeper/husband, Jim. Unfortunately, Jim has been preoccupied with expanding his business for the past few months and hasn't had time or energy to spare for the type of dominance Julie has gotten used to. Although in her mind she is only trying to get attention, her methods have become annoying. During a dinner party the previous night she over did the wine and started a public argument with Joe. Two days before that she pretty much ignored him when he told her to finish up on the computer and come to bed. And this very day she ducked away from his hug saying that she was busy doing things that were generally his responsibility.

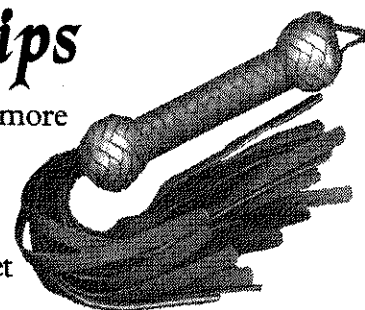
Under normal circumstances Jim would have given her a long lecture about her attitude, then sent her to their bedroom for an hour or so to think about what she'd done wrong, followed by yet another lecture and an intensive spanking with little or no warm up. Because he was working 12 plus hour days, however, he felt he didn't have the energy or time to do so. But pulling away and making a snide remark was taking things too far.

They needed to have a long talk and he determined that Julie would come up with her own disciplines to atone for her poor manners. **N ❖**

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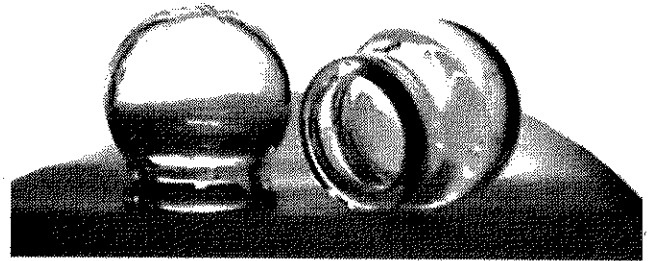
by D.R. Lewis

You see a dark-haired man laying naked and prone on a massage table; there's someone else leaning over him, swirling liquid in an openmouthed ball of glass. Instead of drinking it, she lights it and, quick, puts the cup, which is now alight with swirling blue flame, on his back.

Like a genie, the flame shrinks and vanishes, and the ball sucks onto his skin like a glass, bubble-shaped leach. He doesn't even flinch. She takes another of these bubbles in hand, pours something in it (the smell reminds you of a doctor's office) and swirls it around, and, apparently having decided there's too much, pours some out. She lights this also, and, again, there's a race to get it on the man's relatively hairless skin before the flame goes out. About a dozen of these glass globes have been laid out, and she uses quite a few of them. This must be all right, because the guy on the mat grows more and more relaxed as this little adventure continues. By the time she returns to the first globe she applied, it has sucked so long and so hard that, when she pushes her finger under one of the edges, you hear what must be an air-seal break, and sure enough, there's a queer-looking, perfectly circular hickey on his back. One of the others comes free more easily and leaves no mark. As you quietly walk around to the other side to check the victim out, notice how glassy his eyes are: he looks stoned. After all, he's about as relaxed as he gets — he's naturally stoned on endorphins. If you asked, he'd probably tell you that all he felt was perhaps a light warmth (certainly no burning), followed by a sucking sensation, and then a bit of a buzz.

Even though there's no pain involved, not even a sense of discomfort, the body reacts pretty strongly to **fire cupping**, which is the name for what you've just seen, and releases endorphins, producing a natural high. Endorphins are the body's way of settling down after a rush of adrenaline. Usually it takes a noticeable bit of pain, stress, or distress to trigger endorphins. The exact reason for this reac-

**Even though there's
no pain involved,
... the body reacts ...
to fire cupping,**



tion isn't entirely clear; but it seems the suction from the cups stimulates the nerve endings in the skin, making the nervous system react as if the body were under stress even without a preceding surge of adrenaline or sensation of pain.

History

Cupping goes back a very long way as a medical technique, and seems to have originated in China. As early as the 4th century B.C.E., in China, Ko Hung makes a reference to Chio-fa, which translates to the "horn method." The narrow tip of an animal horn was cut off and the wide, hollow end was placed on the skin. The healer would suck all the air out and then hold a finger over the tiny opening or otherwise plug it to keep suction on the skin, to draw poisons out of the ailing subject.

Eventually the horn was replaced with cupping jars, which are traditionally glass, but they've also been made of bamboo and, more recently, plastic. Archeologists have found bronze cupping jars and it is thought these were used in the times of the Roman Empire. Cupping spread eastward through Greece and Turkey and into Europe. Hippocrates, born circa 460 B.C. (yes, he of the Hippocratic Oath taken by doctors everywhere), used cups as part of his bloodletting procedure. In the second century, Galen, the Greek physician, felt it necessary to renew Hippocrates' teachings and wrote at least three volumes on the subject of bloodletting, which continued as a popular treatment well into the Middle Ages. If doctors didn't use cups in bloodletting, they applied leeches to the victim — er, patient. As late as 1835, physicians were still arguing about the practice, when P.C.A. Louis published a book in

Paris that statistically proved that venesection (bloodletting) was useless, if not harmful, for sick people (since it made the ailing person anemic and weakened the ability to fight the illness). Considering that doctors frequently drew blood until the patient went unconscious, it isn't surprising. King Charles II, for instance, probably died more from the blood loss during a round of cupping and "scarification" than the actual ailment for which his 13 physicians were treating him.

If you're feeling a little bit pale right now, don't give up on the idea just yet. Despite its bloody history, cupping doesn't have to be a blood sport, unless that's what you really intend. A cupped bottom can come out of a cupping either mark-free (not likely, but it can be done) or with a covering of round "alien hickeys." Modern alternative health professionals still use cupping (without bloodletting) as an aid in diagnosis (in an advanced cupping method, the body is massaged with massage oil — this is not advisable for beginners — and when the cups are affixed, the practitioner will slide them up and down the body and read the colors left in the cups trails to ascertain what is happening to the organs beneath the skin), to pull impurities from the body, and to balance the body's energy flow.

Equipment

Cupping jars (aka cups or cupping bells), which are made specifically for fire-cupping and are sold singularly or in sets, are hollow glass spheres with wide, thick-lipped mouths. They resemble roughly Winnie-the-Pooh's honey pots, except that they're clear and, oh bother, they're empty! The smallest will fit about half your thumb inside, while the largest will hold the smallest one with plenty of room inside for a layer or two of packing paper, and there are a few sizes in between. The smaller the cupping jar, the more intense suction it's likely to have. Sizes and prices of the sets vary — a decent set of three cups, small, medium, and large, should be roughly \$8.00, plus about \$5 shipping and handling. With time you'll probably find that you'll want somewhere between six and twelve cups. (You can purchase single one-time-use cups in small,



medium, or large for roughly forty to sixty cents apiece, but these tend to be made of ultra thin glass, and so have a higher likelihood of breaking — personally, I don't use them.)

If cupping jars aren't available, you'll find alternatives in your kitchen. As long as the shape and weight of the glass has a good balance, virtually any round glass will do, as long as it's not cracked and has a smooth, chip-free mouth. Reject any glass that has irregularities, like a rough spot at the lip, as these can cut your cuppee. You may want to experiment with different shapes and sizes. Some people find that tea cups work very well for them, while others swear by stemware because the stems offer a handle to grasp when applying the cup, and once the cup is attached, tugging or flicking the base of the

continued on pg 20

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Firecupping

continued from pg 21

stem makes for some interesting sensations. Keep in mind that the suction in a shot glass will be much more intense than, say, a brandy snifter. Now, it won't do to just slam a jar on somebody. You need to create a vacuum to get that suction going; it's got to be starving for air if it's going to latch on, and that's where fire comes into play.

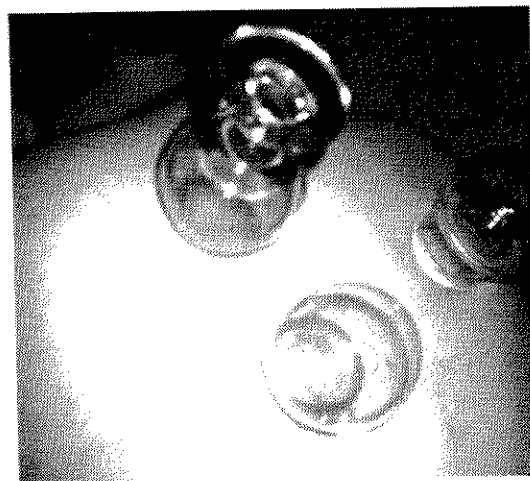
Before we go any further, you know that when you play with fire, there's potential for disaster. You'll need a place to cup that isn't a potential tinderbox. Check out what's over, under, and around you, and keep in mind that some carpets will catch flame when contacted by the merest spark. Since you don't want to barbecue your trusting friend or torch the house, it's a good idea to have a bucket nearby with a couple of wet towels in it. And I do mean nearby — like, right next to you! Why wet towels and not just a bucket of water? Because you'll be burning alcohol inside the cups and if you simply dump water on a runaway alcohol fire, you run the risk of spreading it over a larger area. No! You want to *smother it* with your wet towel.

You're going to need, you guessed it, matches and alcohol. Wait up, Hoss, not just *any* alcohol! *Don't use any kind of whiskey or liquor — no alcohol intended for drinking.* Why? Because the alcohol content might be too low to burn properly or, if there's sugar or some other impurity, it'll burn too hot. This isn't a cremation! You're going to need isopropyl alcohol, and even then, you have to read the labels. You *don't* want isopropyl alcohol 90% — that burns way too hot. You're looking for isopropyl alcohol 70%. The two are often right next to each other on the drugstore shelf, so make sure you get the right one. While you're at the drugstore, you might as well pick up first-aid supplies for burns, just in case. Ideally, your partner won't feel much beyond a light flash of warmth and the suction of the cupping jars, but accidents do happen, so be prepared. You may also want to get out a glass custard cup or some other convenient nonflammable container for pouring off excess alcohol, as well as an ashtray or some other separate receptacle for spent, but still potentially hot matches.

[Note: if you are particularly meek about the idea of fire cupping, there are kits available that work on the principle of vacuum suction. I am not experienced with these, but, if you want to experience this endorphin buzz without the flame, they may well be worth investigating. (See Mr. Patrick's ad, pg 23? and Issue #20- "These Things Suck")]

To Cup or Not to Cup: "Where?" Is the Question

Generally, anywhere you can get a cup to stick is safe, though I would avoid cupping over someone's penis, since this would put it directly in the middle of a fireball, plus, an erection — which is likely in this particular instance — will interfere with the cupping. Also keep in mind that cupping on top of nipples or the clitoris is pretty intense. It might be wise to wait until you're more experienced; either way, be ready to remove the cupping jar immediately. Use common sense: avoid cupping over or around wounds (especially stitches), directly over a bad joint, or the site of a spinal injury, for instance. Don't cup on some-



one who's running a fever, having convulsions, cramps, or is a hemophiliac. Don't cup over a rash or other allergic skin condition. Don't cup on the belly or the lower back of a pregnant woman.

In my partner's and my own experience, the endorphins will come regardless of where you place the cupping jar, although cupping on the nipples or the chest and on the inner thigh tend to bring the giggles on a little faster and heavier.

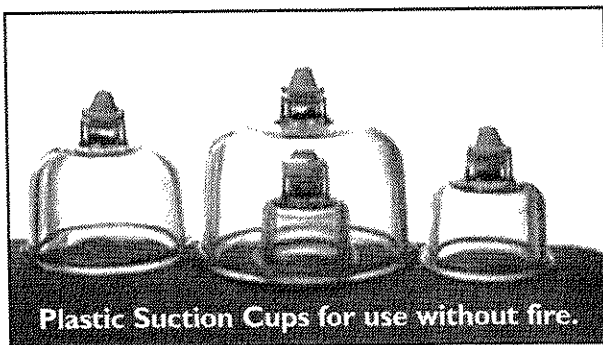
Some other points to remember:

First, it's impossible to cup through clothes and hazardous to even try. The area you plan to cup needs to be bare, so turn up the thermostat and start stripping. The back and chest are the most common places to cup, so, at very least, the shirt comes off. Complete nudity often works best, since alcohol-soaked clothes make excellent torch material and it is easy to spill. Take time to check out your own wardrobe. Any clothes you wear should be close-fitting, and you may want to consider short sleeves. This is definitely not the time to get out that polyester seventies shirt with the long flared sleeves or that ethereal drapey

number you've been saving for a special occasion! Keep in mind that you will very likely end up with a little alcohol on yourself and keep an eye out for the flame. Whenever and wherever appropriate, it might just be simpler for both of you to go nude.

Second, hair burns. If you're cupping someone especially furry, have them shave the cupping area, otherwise you'll scare them to death as they watch and *feel* the searing heat of a meadow-fire blazing across the plain of their skin. Not to mention that you'll want to avoid that unmistakable singed-hair stink which will fill the house!

Third, make doubly sure you're working on *clean* skin: No lotion, no baby oil, no body spritzer, no perfume, no deodorant, no hair gel, hair spray, or mousse; and no hair! Insist on flesh *au naturelle*. — for your partner and yourself (at very least your hands and arms). You don't want any unknown variables — certainly nothing that might burn in a way you don't intend. If you've any doubts, it's off to the showers followed by a good towel drying. Make sure their hair and yours are tied up and out of the way.



Plastic Suction Cups for use without fire.

If the person you're cupping is a bit fat, you'll want to be especially careful. When alcohol gets in to any kind of crevice, between rolls of fat, or even in, say, someone's butt crack, or down between the legs, fire will follow it and may burn them severely before you're even aware there's a problem. Clean up all spills thoroughly, and make sure the area is completely dry before you continue. Make it clear between yourself and your partner: if they feel like they're burning or if the heat is too intense, they are *not* to try and blow the fire out or flail that body part — this will just feed a fire and encourage it to spread. Agree on a safeword ("hot" usually works if you get stumped), and make sure they know that you will use the wet towel. This goes for you too. Should your fingers have a little alcohol on them and catch fire when you light a match, it will usually go out quickly, but if it doesn't, remember in your panic: wet towel.

continued on pg 22

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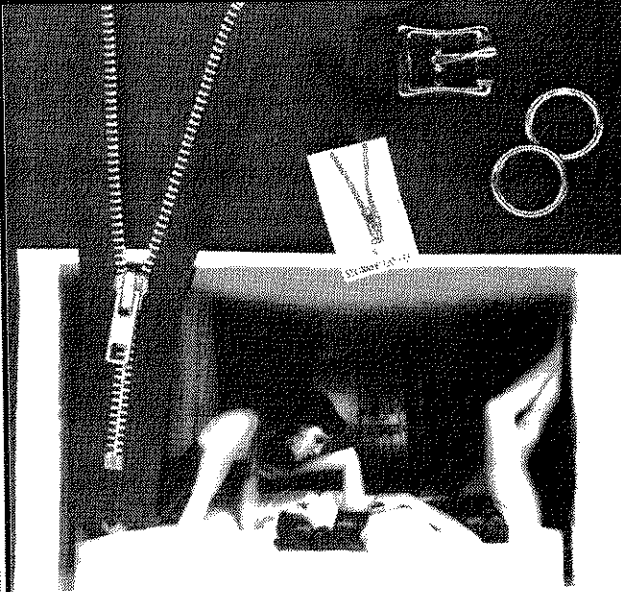
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FireCupping

continued from pg 21

Cupping Procedure

Now that you have your supplies at hand, and your partner is naked and trying not to feel silly, it's time to do some fire cupping. It may sound counter to all the warnings you've just been given, but: Relax! You'll do just fine. Have your partner in cupping sit or lie so that you can get to the area you're going to cup. If you're going to cup on the back, which I recommend, have them sit straddling a chair, facing backwards. Ask them to lean forward, resting their arms or, if the chair has a high back, their head, on the back of the chair. This spreads the back out nicely and gives them physical support so they can relax, too. If you know they have a tendency to get noodly in an intense scene, dispense with the chair and have them lay on their belly — again, be aware of your surroundings and the potential for fire.

Take one of the jars, a medium or large one, pour a little alcohol in it, just enough to wet the entire inside. While you swirl it around to coat the insides, take a finger, dip it in the alcohol inside the cup, and feel the lip to make absolutely certain that it is flawlessly smooth. If it isn't, you mustn't use it. Assuming that you've got a good cupping jar, pour off the excess alcohol (a glass custard cup is an ideal catch-all for this excess, since you can pour alcohol in and out of it much more easily than you can the narrow neck of the alcohol bottle). You're not trying to drip dry it, just pour off the gross excess, because you need some alcohol to light and burn — otherwise the jar isn't going to stick. The inside of the jar should be a bit wet with alcohol.

Light a match. [Hint: it's a lot easier to light the matches from a burning candle than it is to strike each one. Just be sure you're not trying to *see* by candlelight.] Keeping the cup mouth angled up so it doesn't drool alcohol all over, bring it a half inch or so above the place you intend to put it. Bring the match to the mouth of the cup and, once you see it take light, quickly set the cup, mouth *down* on the skin. You don't have to slam it; simply place it quickly and firmly, to form the seal which will quench the flash of fire. Shake out the match once you've set the cup, and set it in a designated dish or ashtray. If you tug gently on the jar, it should cling to the skin and resist movement.

Did it come free? Well, then, either the fire went out before you could place the jar, and this allowed it to suck in too much air before you were able to make the seal — which means you need to move faster; or there wasn't enough alcohol, so the fire wasn't large enough to consume

enough air and the vacuum just wasn't strong enough — which means you need a dash more alcohol. It takes some practice to get a feel for the timing and the right amount of alcohol, but keep in mind that it is better to err on the side of having too little than it is to have too much. Two jars, even if they're identical, will probably differ in intensity, simply because one was placed with better timing, or one, burned better because the perfect amount of alcohol was used. Keep checking with your partner. If they're feeling too much heat, you may want to use less alcohol, or place the jars a half-beat slower. If they snicker or answer from the stratosphere, rest assured, you're doing great!

Once you have successfully placed a jar, it can stay on for up to 15 minutes while you continue to cup other spots, but do go back and check your work periodically. Tug on a jar and ask, "How's this one?" If it feels too intense, remove it. Or if it's not as strong as the others and you want to try that one again, feel free. There really isn't a prescribed limit to the number of cups or the number of



times you place a cup; I've seen a person with as many as 19 cups in place at one time, and that's right about the time you'd start running out of places. If a Top likes to play, he or she may switch the same six or ten cups off and on two or three or five times in all different kinds of placements. Gauge the limits according to your and your partner's reactions and check in with each other. If your cup-pee complains of feeling queasy or dizzy, let up for a while or cut the session short. If you find yourself bored or not paying attention, or if either of you isn't enjoying this, definitely take that as a cue to stop.

Now, the lighter the suction, the less effort it will take to remove a cup. Some you just nudge one side more than the other and it'll come right off, while others refuse to budge. If you have a particularly stubborn cup, push one finger or your thumb in at a single point on the edge, and this should open a way for some air to get inside, just like burping your Tupperware™ — only backwards, and the

cupping jar should come free. If it doesn't let go after that, push down on the flesh beside the lip on the outside with one hand and then apply pressure under the lip with your other hand on the opposite side, and the cup should take air and fall away.

Now it's time to kick back. Barring any mishaps, your friend could be exceptionally friendly and will have a pleasant endorphin glow going. It's wise not to let them drive anywhere too soon or put them in charge of the foundry just yet. If you look up at the clock, and find that you're running late for some engagement, or if it seems like it's taking a very long time for them to recover — longer than an hour or so, some water or milk and a light meal will help your partner become more "grounded" or functional.

Continuing Education

This is a very basic how-to on firecupping. If you find that you want to try something more advanced, I encourage you to seek out a professional (usually this will be an acupuncturist, but don't neglect to check with massage therapists, naprapaths, or a chiropractor with acupuncture or naprapathic training) who will give you hands-on instruction and advice. ♦

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Oriental Medical Supplies, 1950 Washington St., Braintree, MA 02184. 1-800-323-1839.

TCM Supply Corp. 12490 Central Ave., Chino, CA 9171-2666. 1-909-628-9698.

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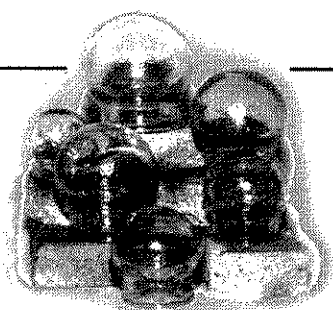
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(D.R. Lewis has demonstrated this cupping technique at several events in Illinois. She has been in the scene for five years and considers herself, "a sadistic witch, something of a pig bottom and a natural-born bootlicker." Her work has appeared in magazines and anthologies and she is working on an SM novel while going to Columbia College in Chicago for her MFA in creative writing.)

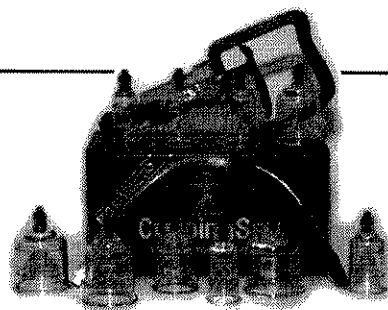


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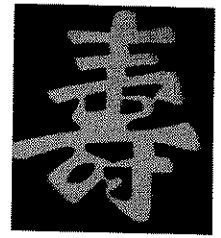
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Asian Cupping Style

Another Approach to the Ancient Art



.....by Dante Greylocke

Fire Cupping - (method, therapy; called the "horn method" in ancient China): Variable method akin to moxabustion. The practitioner may use a cup made of glass, metal, or wood (notably bamboo) and burn alcohol, alcohol-soaked cotton wool, herbs, paper, or a taper therein. Before or after the burning is complete, the practitioner applies the cup upside-down to a relatively flat body surface and leaves it in this position for five to ten minutes. Results include erythema (reddening of the skin due to capillary expansion), edema (excessive fluid accumulation in tissue spaces), and ecchymoses (purple discoloration of the skin due to rupture of blood vessels).

Dictionary of Metaphysical Healthcare 1997 Jack Raso, M.S., R.D.

The practice of cupping goes back to the early days of medicine, the day of the barber-surgeon, wise woman, and free-lance healer. It was used by European cultures to remove "bad humours" and "relieve congestion" of the body in much the same way bleeding was employed (in fact, the two were occasionally used in conjunction). In the classic European fashion, a glass globe, similar to a small, closed-ended hurricane lampshade, was heated over a candle. When the air inside was sufficiently warm, the glass would be placed upon the patient's back. As the globe cooled, the air volume inside dropped. The resulting partial vacuum drew skin up into the glass. The blistering, predictable with the application of hot glass to skin, was taken as a sign that the "humours" were being extracted. A brief example of this method can be seen in

the 1988 film, "Dangerous Liaisons," interspersed with the dueling scene near the end of the film.

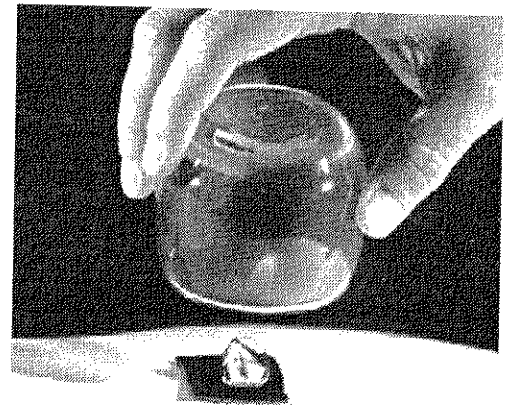
The Asian method is not quite the same. The Confucian prohibition against cutting the body ruled out any deliberate bloodletting. Instead, the benefit was considered to be similar to those of acupuncture. A small fire was started on the patient's back. The fire was extinguished by placing a cup atop it, which in turn created a vacuum as described above. This method is still employed today by those using traditional Asian methods of healing.

If you can dispel the association

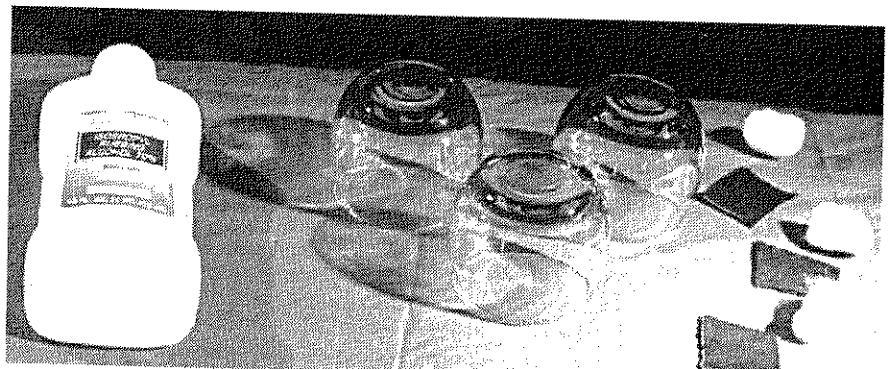
with leeches and purgatives (unless, of course, that's what you're into), cupping can be a deeply sensuous experience.

Cups and Supplies

Although cupping globes of modern manufacture can be obtained, improvisation of equipment is easy, effective and cheap. One may use shot glasses (double-sized pre-



ferred), mugs, or my preference, cups designed to hold votive candles. When picking your cups, look for thick walls and height enough for a small alcohol fire to burn. This is *not* the time to use your grandmother's crystal sherry glasses! You'll





also need cotton balls, 70% rubbing alcohol, and a few scraps of leather bigger than a cotton ball but smaller than the mouth of your glass.

Fire Play

Before giving cupping a try, take a few minutes to review standard fire-play safety. When playing with alcohol fires, remember that it is not the alcohol-soaked object itself that burns, but rather the vapor from the alcohol. Alcohol has a low burning temperature, and the vapors provide a relatively large surface area for ignition. Please be sure that any stray drips or trails are wiped dry before a flame is started. Most small alcohol fires can be clapped out with a quick hand; have a thick blanket available to smother any runaway flame. Have ice and/or a cold washcloth available in case your sub gets any minor burns. When playing in public, check with your hosts or dungeon monitor for the house policy on fire play; an unexpected blue flame rising from your sub may cause a quick end to your scene!

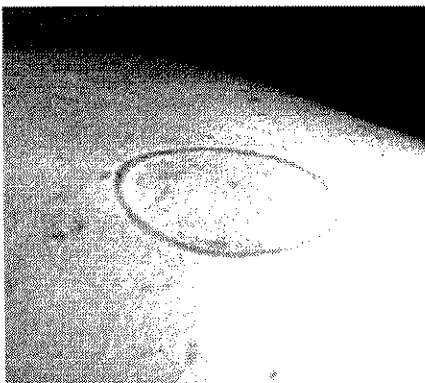
Done properly, the risk to the "cuppee" while cupping is slight.

Cupping Procedure

Place the leather pads on a relatively flat and hairless part of your sub's body (hair can make it difficult to establish suction). Remember, any area of the body which moves with normal breathing may be difficult to

cup. If you wish to experiment on yourself before trying this on anyone else, try the inside of your thigh. Get a bit of alcohol on a cotton ball; a quick "up and down" with the bottle while holding a cotton ball over the mouth should be sufficient. Wring any excess from the cotton, place it upon the leather patch, and wipe up any extra alcohol from your fingers or the sub's back. Strike a match, light the ball, allow the flame to reach its apogee. Bring the mouth of the cup straight down over the flame, centering the fire within the glass as much as possible.

If you've done this correctly, two things will happen. The flame will go out, and the skin beneath the cup will be gently sucked into the cup's interior. The initial suction has been described as sensuous rather than torturous (my Significant Other's first reaction to cupping was

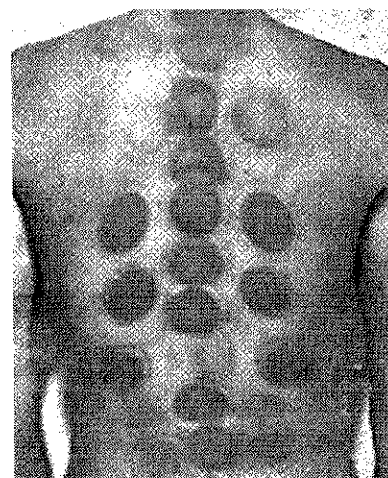


"Ewww-ah! Get it off! ... Now do it again!") Extended exposure of approximately ten minutes can lead to fairly impressive "hickeys" (depending upon the relative frailty of your partner's skin, of course). Remember, cupping was traditionally used in conjunction with bleeding; any break in the skin beneath the cup may well lead to blood flow. (For more information on suction play, see, "These Things Suck!" in issue #20) Try one cup, try two, try as many as

you can fit and your sub can stand! To break the suction, press against a point on the skin just outside the cup while lifting the cup at an angle (think about the suction-tipped dart gun you had as a child — the principle's the same).

The applications for cupping are limited only by your imagination and willingness to experiment. It's a natural combination with wax play. It can work nicely in a "Salem Witch Trial" or "Spanish Inquisition" role-playing scene. Get creative with odd-shaped cups; the pattern of marks left behind can be interesting. Use cupping to create a temporary "brand" on your submissive before a play party (remembering, of course, to avoid weakening areas that you intend to strike later). For those already versed in suction play, cupping offers one more diabolical device in the repertoire, and one that can be improvised fairly easily. For novices to such play, cupping allows a way to experiment with both suction and fire play without making a large investment in equipment (my kit was assembled for less than ten dollars).

My thanks to Suzanne (my S.O. partner in crime and test pilot). We hope that you enjoy your research with cupping as much as we did. ❖

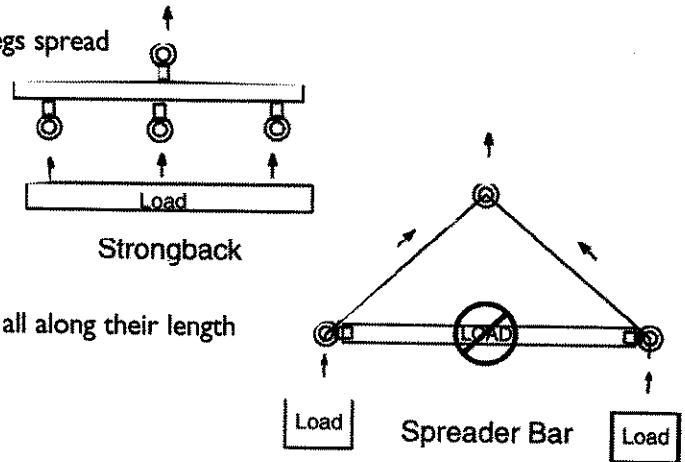


The Spreader

By Mitch Kessler

Spreader Bars are used more often to hold arms or legs spread to a desired distance, than for suspension. When a spreader bar, particularly an adjustable spreader bar, is rigged for lifting, arrange the lines so that the strain is transferred from the load at each end, to the end fittings, and from there to the lifting ring or hood. **No load should be placed on the bar itself,** for it will probably bend and collapse!

Especially strong spreader bars which can take load all along their length are properly called **Strongbacks**.

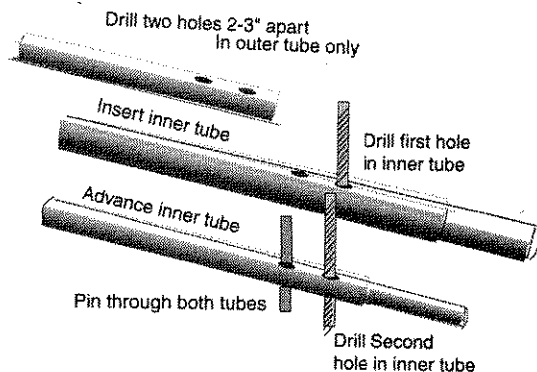
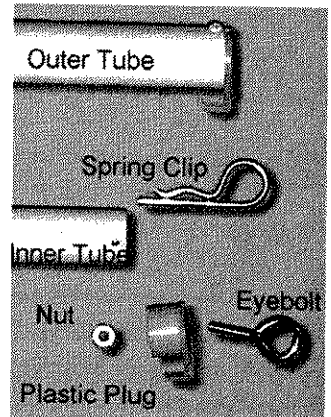


Adjustable Spreader from a Closet Rod

Expandable rods for hanging things in closets can be found in every good-sized housewares store or department. For about ten bucks you get two nicely paired steel tubes that nest inside each other, and a pair of plastic end-fittings. These are intended to hold the bar to the sides of the closet, but they make for easy mounting of the end fittings for the spreader bar.

In addition to the closet bar kit, you will need a pair of eye-bolts, and a spring clip. This last item is found in stores that sell bumper hitches and other trailer accessories.

To make the spreader adjustable, make a row of holes in the inner bar. You can, of course, drill them through at random or measure and mark the divisions you want. On



the other hand if you want to do a neat and regular job, the diagram shows how to drill a row of evenly spaced holes without measuring. In addition to making even spaces between the holes, this method preserves the alignment of the row of holes, so you do not have to twist the inner tube in order to find the place to set the pin.

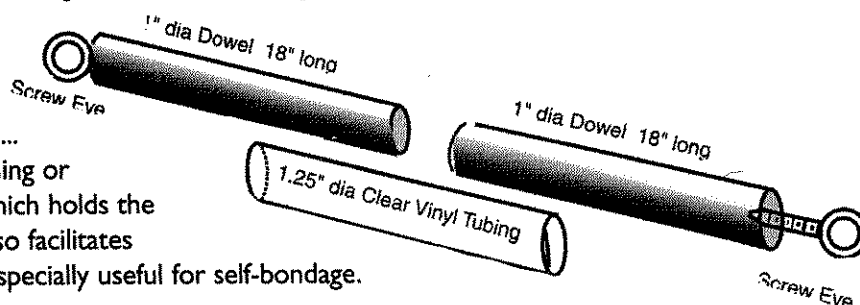
With the line of holes drilled, install the eyebolts in the plastic end fittings and the end fittings into the steel pipes. Put the smaller tube inside the larger. Now, to use, simply extend the tube, line up a set of holes when the bar is at the desired length, and insert the spring pin to lock the assembly. If you couldn't find a spring pin, a nut and bolt, or a cotter pin will do the same job.

Coming in the next issue:
The Ultimate Spreader Bar.

... Bar

Really Quick but Very Clean Spreader Bar

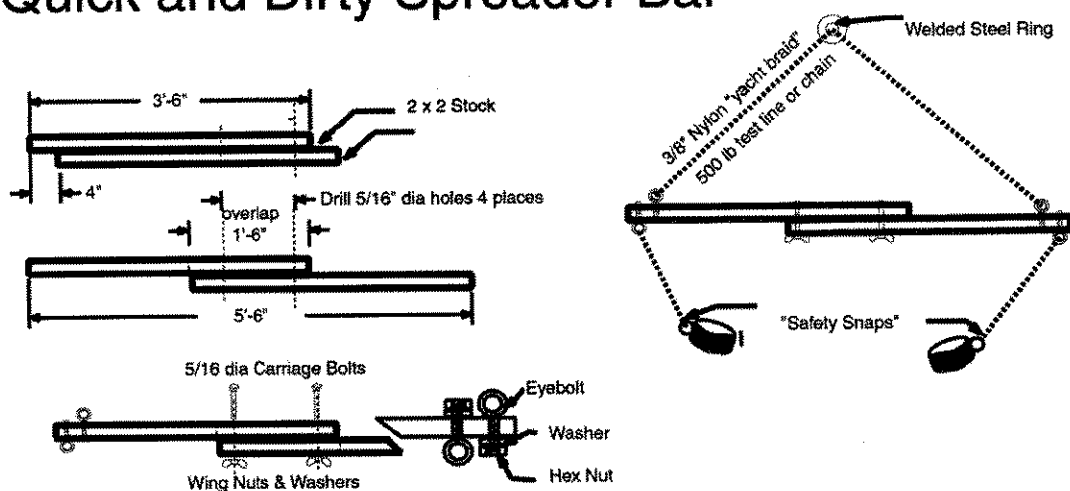
This bar can be "built" in less than an hour, including the time spent shopping for parts at the local hardware store. It does one thing only ... it holds legs (or knees) apart in a standing or lying position. The flexible vinyl tube which holds the two pieces of wood dowel together also facilitates emergency quick release -- making it especially useful for self-bondage.



Doweling normally comes in 3' lengths. One piece cut in half will serve for leg-spreading with or without an overhead attachment point. Drill pilot holes in one end of each piece. Twist in the screw eyes. Insert dowels into plastic tube. Breaks down small for easy transport. Painting is optional.

Longer pieces can be rigged for securing arms, if rigged as a spreader bar with a central attachment point. **However, this bar is not intended to be used for lifting.**

Quick and Dirty Spreader Bar



This is a spreader bar that can be used for arms or legs, and if rigged as shown can sustain a fair amount of weight. **It is not intended for full suspension.**

To build: Use 2 pieces of 2x2 stock about 3.5ft long. Place one on top of the other, leaving 2 to 4" at each end for the eyebolts and washers.

Drill 2 holes, 5/8" dia., about a foot apart. Spread the bar, leaving about 1.5' overlap and drill 2 more holes.

At each end of each bar drill two holes for the eyebolts. Bolt in place with washers on the nut side only.

Insert 5/8" diameter carriage bolts and assemble with wing nuts and washers. Remove nuts to disassemble for storage.

Rigging: The center attachment point should be as strong as possible. Use a welded stainless steel ring or cast iron hook rated for at least 1200 lbs

The Joys and Challenges of Topping

By Cléo Dubois with Emma Bianchi

These observations come from a perspective shaped by more than 15 years playing on both sides of the SM equation — as a Top in my private and professional life, and switching as a bottom in my private life. They are also deeply influenced by my long experience working with couples learning about the dynamics of BDSM, in my **Academy of SM Arts**. This article also focuses on the specifics of BDSM play, rather than the 24/7 D/S relationship.

Honesty and Communication

The most basic requirement is that the parties involved be committed to being honest and open with one another. In order to become a good communicator, you need to know some basic things: What you want, what you know, and who you are. These things are equally important for both a Top and a bottom to consider, but right now we are going to focus on the Dominant.

You should be aware of your skill level as a Top. Know what you can do and are comfortable doing, and what you're not sure of and need information about. Attending classes and demonstrations, sharing information, seeking a mentor in the SM community, are all ways that expert SM practitioners have learned and honed their skills. Make use of them!

Self-Awareness

Know your limits as a Top. Not only your skill-level, but know the kinds of play you are really not comfortable with, or interested in doing. For instance, I refuse to do Nazi interrogation scenes, despite having been asked by a number of Jewish clients.

Next, think about your desires. Getting clear about what we want to experience in a scene is a sure way of feeling more satisfied with our dominant role.

But, getting what you want is more complex than one

would think in BDSM play. It seems that there are many of us out there who "do" the bottom, and end up not getting what *we* really want. This isn't good for us, and, as many bottoms will tell you, it's often not really good for them either. If we're devoting our energy to fulfilling the bottom's needs, we're really flip-flopping the dynamic. Who's the master and who's the servant after all? Obviously, in great play everyone's needs are fulfilled. The way to get there is to make sure that there is some parity in the energetic exchange. It's not about equality, but it is about valuing each individual's needs equally. The way to get there is to assume your role, enjoy the goodies that the role has to offer, and stay in it!



Look at these. Think about how the different kinds of pleasures resonate with you:

Would you like to see your bottom's raw, naked, uncivilized, animal core, brought out to the light of day, knowing that *you* brought it out?

Would you like to bask in the love and devotion of your submissive?

Would you like to ask for and receive service, in just the way that pleases you? (This one sounds great, but in fact it is very difficult for some of us, and particularly for women, in my observation, to demand and receive pleasure just the way we want it.)

How does the very act of taking make you feel? Does it turn you on? Does it make you feel your own personal power? How does that feel? Pretty good? Think about taking your bottom to their limits, to there and back, really experiencing the power of your own skill, your voice, hand and brain, of your own sadism, of your own desire to hurt and overpower, because you know you can; because it's OK.

Pushing your bottom to his or her limits, and perhaps crossing them. Does this excite you? Does it scare you? This kind of play obviously takes a

great deal of care and responsibility. One thing you can do to push your bottom's limits is use your sweetness and powers of seduction, asking him or her to give you just one more, just for you. Gaining your bottom's trust and consent in this way is often a very powerful experience for all concerned.

This leads in to the pleasure of increasing intimacy, and feeling connection with your bottom, just for its own sake. Making eye contact, holding hands, a gentle kiss, whispering something sweet at a crucial moment in the scene, can alter the energy and powerfully increase connectedness if this is something desired by the players. Have you ever experienced, for instance, in the middle of a fierce whipping, that you are overwhelmed with compassion for your bottom? These kinds of conflicting emotions are the very stuff of SM, and noticing and focusing on them can be a great source of a pleasure for a Top. In such moments, a Top can experience total power and control, and complete vulnerability, all at once. This is, to my mind, a beautiful paradox, and very hot!

Just giving someone an experience they have never had before, taking them to a new place, whether this is just in terms of a new and interesting sensation, or more importantly in terms of their inner life. In my SM travels I have often had the honor of bringing, or being granted healing and an experience of personal catharsis. Many practitioners of SM report the centrality of a sense of spiritual growth and healing in their play. Although, while SM can be a powerful therapeutic tool, please remember that *it is not therapy*.

In a larger frame, it can be very gratifying to watch one's bottom grow over time, as they increase in their self-knowledge and acceptance of pain and pleasure through their play with you. Have you thought about training? This might be about teaching a bottom to serve you the way you like it, or to take sensation in new and challenging ways. Think about teaching techniques of taking pain, for example teaching your bottom to receive sensation without making any noise at all, might bring your bottom to a very different place than simply counting strokes and re-offering themselves for another one.

Using techniques like this, one can begin to play with energy in fascinating ways. Have you felt the electricity running between you and your bottom, that makes you tingle all over? I call this "running energy." Of course, Tantra practitioners and other *aficionados* of body ritual have been doing this around the world for centuries. Sometimes, in a scene, I get to a place where I feel guided.

... succeeding in Dominant service is a large and important part of the pleasure we get as Tops.

I let go of all of my plans, all of my conscious decisions, and just let my intuition take over. What a fabulous feeling! Pure power. Pure joy. Being totally present.

Another big pleasure in Topping can be discovering something new that you enjoy. If your bottom really wants to experience some technique or sensation that you are not versed in, learning about it and trying it out can be both challenging and extremely rewarding. Say bondage has never been a particular kink of yours, but your bottom longs to be restrained and to struggle under your power. If you go to the trouble to learn some knots and some bondage techniques, not only are you taking your bottom and yourself to a new place, but you have learned a skill and an art that is both creative and beautiful. This in itself is empowering and pleasurable, not to mention the aesthetic pleasure to be gained from admiring your handiwork, and how delicious your bottom looks struggling in its grasp!

In addition you will have pleased your bottom, and though the dictates of the role may not allow us to acknowledge it, let us mention that for most of us succeeding in Dominant service is a large and important part of the pleasure we get as Tops. We get to feel desired and sought after as a result and our sense of personal empowerment skyrockets!

Another aspect of Topping that might thrill you is really facing and dealing with a taboo subject. Letting down the usual rules of propriety and going to a place with



continued on pg 30

The Joys of Topping

continued from pg 29

your bottom where you are being completely "un-p.c.," perhaps dishing out relentless nasty humiliation, giving vent to that really mean streak of yours, can be challenging, but can also be delicious for both parties. In addition, we stand to learn a great deal about the nature and dynamics of interpersonal power when we travel to the extremes and access our most basic emotions. Again, great care must be taken, and both players must be clear on the line between fantasy and reality. I cannot stress too much that any kind of SM play should not be attempted while partners or players are experiencing anger or unresolved conflict with one another..

One way of keeping ourselves conscious of this boundary between fantasy and reality is to use role play games to provide a context for the flow of all this power: Mistress, Medical, Daddy, Schoolteacher, Military, and more all provide hot button-pushing roles for us to explore and reap the rewards of playing with power. A ritual collaring, for example, can give a clear indication of when a scene starts and ends. In the Old Guard leather scene, for example, no-one would ever be seen putting on their own collar. It would always indicate that the submissive was either in scene-space, or it was a sign of being owned if their Master or Mistress was absent. This little ritual allowed the submissive to stay in bottom-space, and the Top to determine the beginning and end of the play session. I certainly don't let my bottoms remove their own collars, even after they've come!

All these many joys of Topping come with their own challenges. Some can be a source of great joy in themselves, as we meet them, and grow with them and through them. Other challenges are not so fruitful. I have found that the joy and challenge generally go together in SM.

For players that are in a primary relationship with one another, the biggest challenge I have observed is that the Top is afraid of pushing the bottom, of hurting him/her, of really taking the bottom down. Reminding the bottom that there is a "please slow down" safeword available can give the Top some space to really push the bottom; to hand over to the bottom some of the responsibility for their safety. The bottom really does have some level of responsibility in a scene, and it's a good thing for the Top to remind them both of this.

To push your bottom, don't ask for permission! Announce your intention. Tell them to present their body to you for your further pleasure. See how fast they obey

you. Maybe they need a little tenderness to encourage them to give you more. You might want to tell them how much you appreciate the gifts of their body, their vulnerability or the service they are performing. Don't be shy to let them know if it turns you on! There might also be times when making your bottom beg for more is just what is needed. The traditional, "Mistress, please may I have another?" can work wonders to push a bottom to the limit.

For all this to work, you must have provided the bottom with a sense of safety. You have to have their trust. Don't show insecurity. If you wrap the whip or step on your slave's naked toes with your high heeled boots, don't try to cover it up! Acknowledge your mistake and go on!



Another challenge is for a Top to follow his or her own intuition. To do this, it's essential to be relaxed, alert, and into what you're doing. Also, be sensitive and open to the bottom's responses. Try ordering your bottom to breathe audibly, and let the sounds they wish to make be heard. The old-guard rule of keeping one's eyes on the floor and being completely quiet might make reading your bottom's responses much more difficult, though it might of course be appropriate at times! Watch your bottom's body: tension, clenched hands, breath-holding, a body not offering itself to you when you order it to, might be signs that you are going too hard, too fast. Have you ever put on a tit-clamp that you can tighten, as you look into your submissive's eyes to see how far you can take them with that pain as you slowly screw the clamp tighter and tighter with a smile on your face? That gets me high every time I do it!

Part of intuition is paying close attention to your own turn-on and emotional response, as well. If you're having a good time, and getting turned on, that's a pretty good sign that things are going well.

Being really open to your bottom's responses means sometimes letting go of the original plan you might have made for your scene. You may tap into a phobia you didn't know about. Say you wished to surprise your submissive with their first temporary play-piercing. You pull the ster-

ile needle out of its packaging, remove your bottom's blindfold, and show the clean needle that you so much want to slide through his nipple. He suddenly starts sweating, turning pale and approaches near panic. You have obviously run into an undisclosed phobia, and you need to put that needle away and reassure him that you are *not* going to pierce him today — perhaps next time! Start doing something different, and discuss the difficulty later. If you try to process the problem, you might as well give up on the scene then and there.

Remember, there was a time when you had not tried anything kinky, as a Top or bottom. At some point you opened yourself to exploring the unknown. Stay in touch with that spirit of exploration, and you might enjoy all kinds of new activities and roles that were never, to your knowledge, part of your original fantasies! Allowing your male submissive to wear frilly girl's panties on his request might lead you and him to discover and enjoy his female persona, complete with corsets, wig and make-up! You never know until you try it!

One of the biggest challenges faced by a Top is taking the initiative in matters of communication and negotiation. The first step is establishing a level of safety and trust between players so that fantasies can be freely shared. Make sure that the terms you are using mean the same thing to each of you. C/B torture might mean to your male bottom having his balls squeezed, and to you, inserting twenty needles into his scrotal sac! Humiliation might mean spread-eagled bondage to the bottom, but golden showers to you! Or vice versa! Ask your partner, "What do you mean?"

Once you've established a common vocabulary, you need to "negotiate for parity." What are you both looking for in a scene? Do you have enough compatible interests? In BDSM, there are six elements: bondage and discipline, domination and submission, and sadism and masochism. Where on these axes do your interests lie? Are you more interested in taking the role of governess? Or in flogging your bottom into deepest subspace? Both?

Is he or she wishing to have their genitals bound, tormented, and forced to orgasm? How willing are you to take your partner on a journey that is more for them than for you? This will depend on the level of your relationship. Are you interested in switching and taking turns? You need to determine whose needs lie where, and work out how will you get them met. If there's not enough parity, perhaps you can work out a system of rewards, or maybe some service! I know a 24/7 Arizona couple, a male Master and his long-time female partner and slave. She likes to get tied up in elaborate bondage, while he needs to get flogged once in a while. The dynamic between them doesn't involve switch-

I like to express my sadism in a way that is clean and fiery, not clouded by anger

ing, but to get this need met, he trained her to whip him, which she does very well from a position of service.

Another way to get one's needs met is to go outside the primary relationship for certain kinds of play. Obviously, negotiating non-monogamy is a tricky minefield and whole books could, and have been, written on it. One great resource is *The Ethical Slut* by Dossie Easton and Catherine Liszt (Greenery Press, 1997). The community player often shares aspects of his or her play outside the primary relationship, with their partner's support and clearly negotiated boundaries. Suppose that your submissive is into being lightly spanked and disciplined as your personal French maid, but that you crave the high of giving a long, hard flogging to someone who can really fly with it. Or imagine your bottom is just dying to taste the delights of temporary piercing, but that you feel faint at the sight of needles. If you are out, and live in a place with an active community, the opportunities are there to discover and explore.

In a casual negotiation with a friend or community member, or someone you may have met on the internet, remember that both parties have the right to decline if it doesn't feel right. You can always say no.

As well as the challenges of communicating, achieving parity, and getting one's needs met, there are a bunch of challenges in Topping which are a little less pleasant to deal with, and which we would all like to avoid, if at all possible. For example, I personally prefer to avoid getting to a place of anger in the course of a scene. If I find myself, despite good negotiation and my best intentions, getting angry with the bottom due to her manipulation of me or the situation, I warn her that I won't continue Topping if she tries to push me into it. I like to express my sadism in a way that is clean and fiery, not clouded by anger and resentment. Indeed, I will stop the scene, at least for a while, until my anger has receded. As well as the challenges of communicating, achieving parity, and getting one's needs met, there are a bunch of challenges in Topping which are a little less pleasant to deal with, and which we would all like to avoid, if at all possible. For example, I like to avoid getting to a place of anger in the course of a scene. If I find myself, despite good negotiation and my best intentions, getting angry with the bottom due to her manipulation of me or the situation, I warn her that I

continued on pg 46

BOOK REVIEW

by Steve Vakesh

Between the Body and the Flesh: Performing Sadomasochism

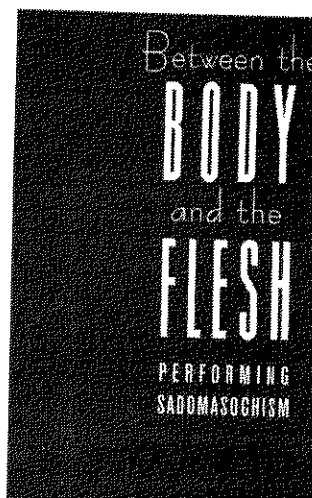
by Lynda Hart,

(NY: Columbia U. Press, 1998)

269 pages \$17.50

BDSM is becoming more and more interesting to academics, though mostly to social scientists. This is the first book to discuss not what we do, but what we write. Hart, a professor of English and Theater Arts at the University of Pennsylvania, explores lesbian BDSM through the works of Pat Califia and Dorothy Allison with particular attention to the boundaries between reality and fantasy. Hart's comparison of Allison's short BDSM story "Private Rituals" with her award-winning novel *Bastard Out of Carolina* is particularly interesting.

While Hart admits she has a fetish for theory, you may not. This book is more readable than many works of literary criticism, but still it is quite dense. If you're not at least passingly familiar



with works of the holy trinity of deconstruction (Derrida, Foucault, and Lacan), you will probably have some trouble getting through it. A little background on Freudian psychology wouldn't hurt either, though Hart quickly dismisses Freud's assumption that women are inherently masochistic and his equally facile assumption that they have no fetishes.

Hart directly attacks the argument made by many feminist scholars such as Ann Douglass that BDSM promotes violence against women; that it is a cloak for patriarchal oppression. In 1980 the National Organization for Women in a strangely worded manifesto condemned BDSM along with pederasty, public sex, and pornography. As Hart points out, while NOW affirmed the right of lesbians to a "lifestyle," the wording of this document seemed to indicate that sexual activity was not an acceptable part of that lifestyle. Many in the women's movement, such as the organizers of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, followed NOW's lead and condemned a host of sexual practices including the use of dildos. It is hardly news that the religious right quickly co-opted NOW's position and trotted it out for the Meese Commission. Their spokespeople continue to use it in the debates on arts funding. Hart argues, however, that the right wing assault on radical sexuality stems not from misguided morality, but from racism. The right wing used the same rhetoric to attack people of color as it does members of the sexual fringe and justifies both as needed to protect white women from corrupting influences.

Hart offers a fascinating exploration of how the sexual practices of a tiny minority became central to the debate on sexuality, violence, and gender within our society. Her book is sure to fuel the debate on a number of sexual topics. ♦

(Steve Vakesh, an academic and avid reader, is a frequent *Guardian* contributor)

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THE LURE OF THE UNDERGROUND

BOOK REVIEW too by Carolyn Vakesh

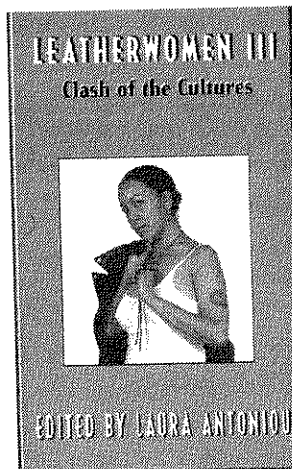
Leatherwomen III: Clash of Cultures

By: **Laura Antoniou (ed.)**,
(Masquerade, 1998), 348 pages, \$6.95

In Antoniou's latest edited collection she has gathered stories that avoid most of the cliches that mar far too many BDSM stories: ultra-wealthy tops, "my adventures at leather convention X," ultimate ceremonies of submission, and reworked scripts of "what I did last night in my bedroom" (or what I wish someone had done to me last night in my bedroom). The stories in this collection are told from the viewpoints of women who are not white, not wealthy, and for the most part not members of the organized fetish community. It is a nice breath of fresh air. Like Antoniou, I am pleased by the explosion in fetish erotica publishing over the last decade. Unfortunately, it has brought with it Sturgeon's Law: ninety percent of what is being published is crap. This book is not.

If anyone had told me they could write a plausible lesbian, let alone BDSM, story set in the Amish community, I would not have believed them. In her superb story "Nacht Ruck," Vivian Sinclair does exactly that. Her story alone is worth the cost of the book. It is a touching, romantic piece that builds erotic tension slowly while emphasizing plot and character development. She presents the most vivid depiction of an alien culture of any of the stories in this book. I will certainly not look at the Amish the same when next I visit Holmes County, Ohio. This is apparently Sinclair's first published work. Hopefully we can expect more from her in the future.

The other stories in this collection run through a panoply of cultures, mostly East Asian and Caribbean. M. Christian, Pagan O'Leary, Joan Sherwood, Shar Rednour have done their usual excellent work. Margaret Weller's fast paced and intense "Hiroshima" is particularly good. Robyn Mills' story, set at the security checkpoint in Israel's Lod Airport, reminded me of my own childhood run-in with an attractive Israeli policewoman at that airport. She discovered the very realistic cap gun in my carry-on bag that family friends, in a complete absence of common sense, had given me as my family was leaving for the airport.



Unfortunately, the one story set solidly in the Jewish community rang false. Perhaps as a member of that culture, I'm simply too close to it.

Women appear in these stories as both top and bottom, gay, bi, and straight. Men appear in more of the stories than Antoniou's previous collections, and usually in favorable roles. Only two of the authors presented them as the boorish, sexist stereotypes common as villains in older, lesbian erotica. Both of their stories would have been improved by better-developed antagonists, though both are still quite good.

Antoniou has added another excellent collection to her body of work, but the book we're all waiting for is *Tales From the Marketplace*. It was supposed to be out in the Spring of '98. Where is it? ❖

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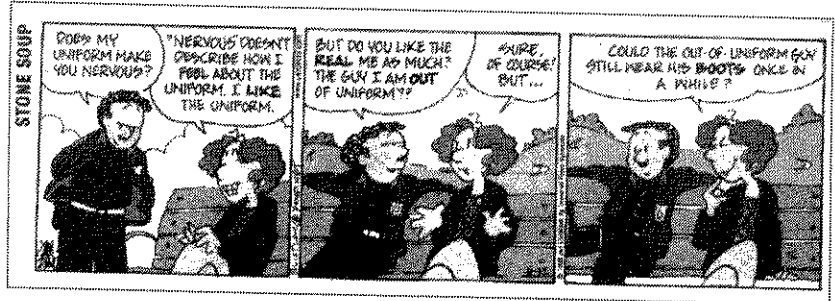
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From an "alternative weekly newspaper in Vancouver, British Columbia" comes this vodka ad sent by **Keith K.** who adds, "Perhaps using alcohol to access the Dominant in us isn't the best image we want to portray, but I thought it was interesting anyway."

Looks like the groom used it to "access" a bride as well as a Domina. *Skoll!*

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Reader **Glenn Di** found this in a local paper while on a hunting trip. Wonder if they have t-shirts!! Of course we will send them a copy of this *Guardian!*

Q&A With the Steak Guy / Ad Advice / The Doonesbury Startups

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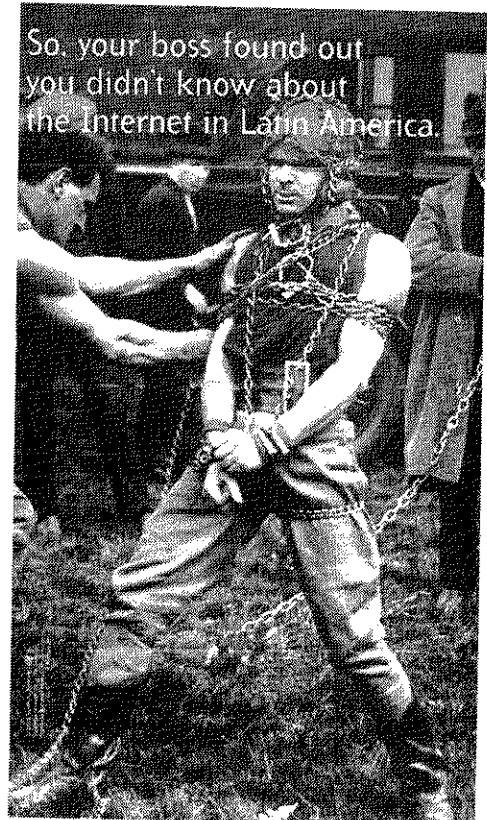
Tina Rock found both of these bondage themes.

The ad at left is from *Interactive Week Magazine*, (11/98) for **Starmedia**.

"Latin America's #1 Internet Community."

The one on the right is the cover of the current issue of *Your Company Magazine*.

Thanks Tina.



Genuine



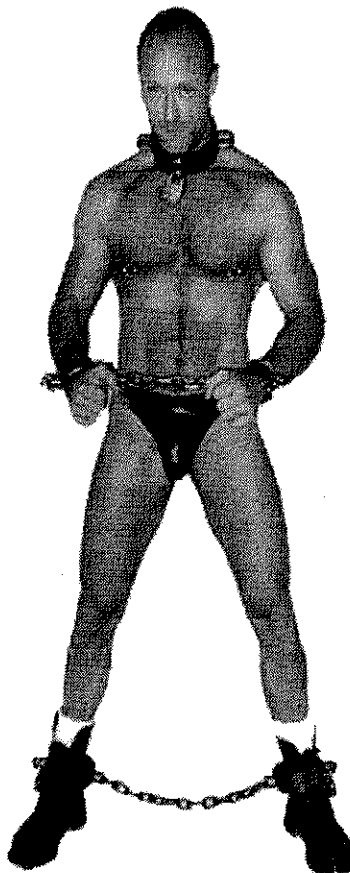
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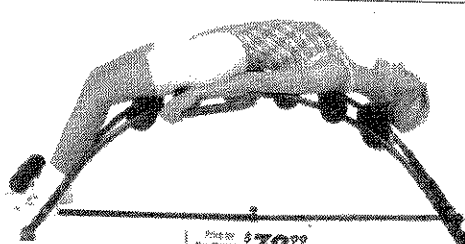
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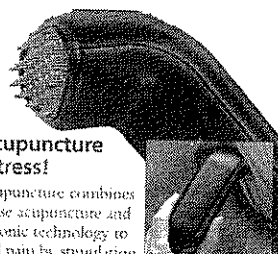
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"Everybody's Doin' It!"

Looks like the latest fad is the curved bondage rack. (See expensive version in #31) The **Body Bridge** above is from reader **Lisa B** in Mississippi. The one at left is from good ole reliable Damark.



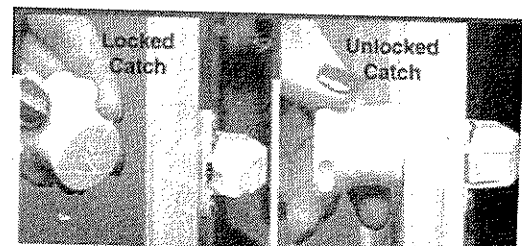
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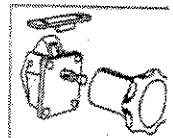
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Jessica in Nevada tells us that if you order more than one item, all others are 20%. She and her friends got together and ordered 2 for each of them (one for each hand).



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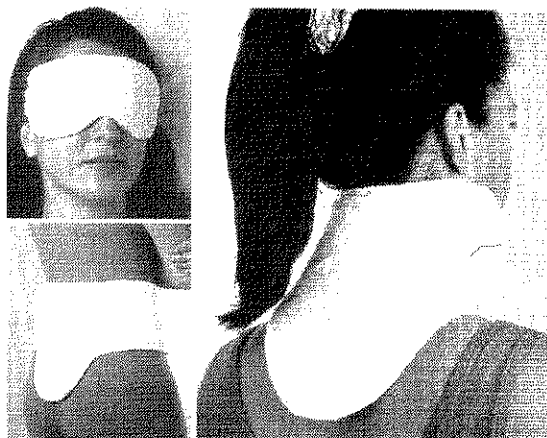
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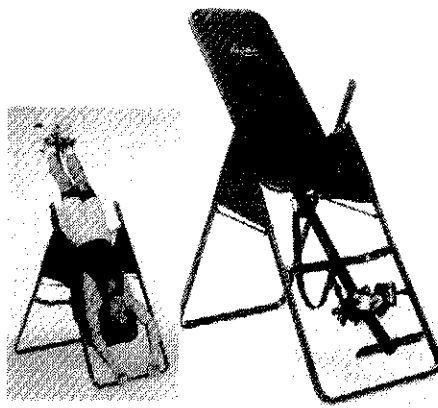
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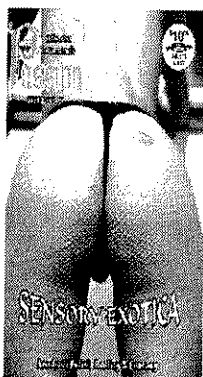
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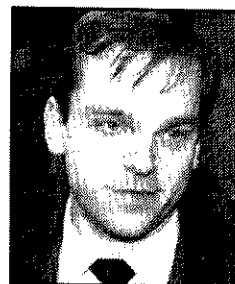
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COMMUNITY MATTERS - LEGAL

Jovanovic, Carter Stevens vs Hearst, Scanlon ... and (still) the Houghtons

The *Guardian* has learned that Oliver Jovanovic, still incarcerated, is awaiting appeal of his conviction on charges of kidnapping and rape (See *Issues #30 and 31*) If he loses his appeals, he will be sent to a "longer-term" prison to serve his sentence of fifteen years to life. At Downstate, his is a "closely monitored case," requiring "extra supervision," presumably for his own safety. This also means isolation from the general population and more restrictive conditions on a daily basis. However, he is within reasonable distance from NY City and his parents can visit.

The Defense and the People have filed their lengthy briefs, and an *amicus*



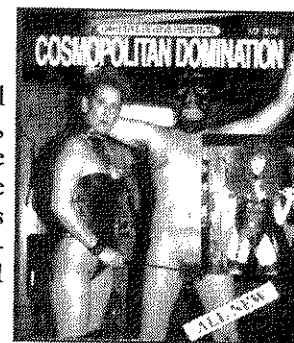
curiae document from outside attorneys might be submitted. The Appellate Court has ordered that it be heard in early February '99.

In the meantime, at this time of year he could use some *friendly* cards and wishes. Address them to:

Oliver Jovanovic - #98A 3709
Downstate Correctional Facility
POB 445, Fishkill, NY 12524-0445

Does this look like the *Cosmo* cover to you?
Right! Uh, huh!

Yet, the legal minions of the Hearst Corp. are still giving Carter Stevens (of *S&M News* fame) a hard time, claiming now that the very presence of such a magazine in the marketplace is degrading and defaming the *Cosmo* name and reputation! (With some of the topics covered in *Cosmo* these days, we think he should countersue — that they are giving *his* publication a bad name!) ♦



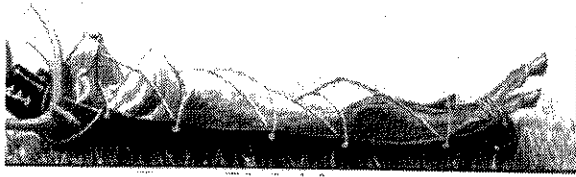
"The Houghtons Have Left the Building" ... in fact, once the children were safely out from under the jurisdiction of the Family Court they skipped town altogether, to pick up the threads of their lives elsewhere. This is not surprising in light of the activities of scene people on both coasts who say they will continue to pursue "the truth" until they can "prove" that "Houghton was a scam all along." There are supposed to be "documents" in "the Court House" that they can lay hands on that will prove that the case "had nothing to do with S/M". Readers will remember that THAT is supposed to have been the position taking by the Police Detective who brought the charges and that NY Family Court documents are routinely "sealed" against just this kind of investigation.

The *Guardian* has seen copies of the two "police reports" that started all this and is frankly unable to understand what makes them credible. They are *not* official reports at all ... but email renditions of telephone conversations, and they contradict each other on several significant points. What's going on? Who knows? But, "It ain't over, till it's over." ♦

Chris Scanlon's defamation suit against 2 of the 3 GMSMA defendants is still in Mediation. If the parties cannot reach a settlement, the case will go to a Federal Jury, early this spring, where Scanlon will assert that the BDSM Community *is* a community whose collective opinion *is* of value to those subjected to it. Interesting indeed!

Unexpected Sources

Deer (or Dear) Drag



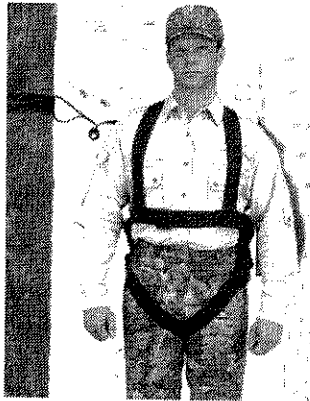
This heavy plastic tarp can be used for transporting deer or keeping humans just where you want them.

TJ 22-1989-200 at **\$24.99** is the "Magnum Size" suitable for Bears and other big guys ...

and Hunter Harness



A



C

Apparently, deer hunters like to tie themselves into trees when stalking their prey. **Cabela's**, called "the World's Foremost Outfitter for outdoor sport," provides a variety of gear for the purpose.

The Full Body (A)

TJ-41-2293 and

Big Man Harness (C)

TJ-41-2292

are light-duty restraints at **\$24.99**

The Seat-O-The Pants Safety Harness TJ-41-3294 at **\$64.99** offers extra security and upright positioning for full suspension at about \$25 less than the cost of an industrial safety harness.

all from Cabela's Sporting Goods Supply (800) 237-4444

At about 20" in width, these are lightweight, pre-made and extremely strong spreader bars that don't cost very much

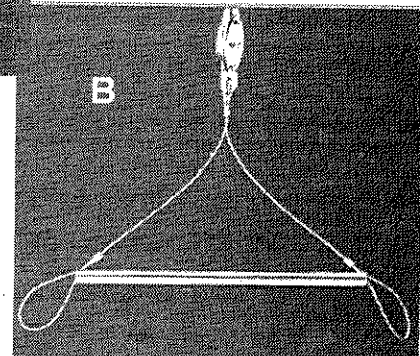
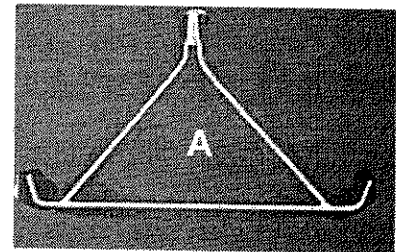
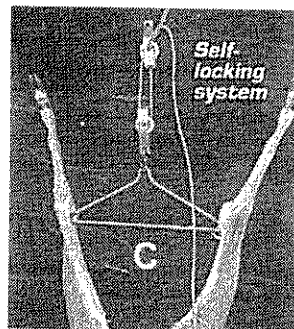
TJ-22-1469 Utility Grade \$6.99 (A)

TJ-22-1468 Cinch Gambriel \$15.99 (B)

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Scholarly Writings on BDSM and Related Themes: A Bibliography

----- **Michael P. Marks, Ph.D.**

The purpose of this article is to provide a guide to people who have an interest in researching the scholarly literature on BDSM-related themes. For the most part, what are not included are beginners' or how-to guides to SM activities. Instead, most of the sources listed are written by academicians with an eye towards explaining some aspect of alternative sexuality.

It was not until the latter half of this century that academic interest in SM moved out of the fields of psychology and medicine and into disciplines such as anthropology, history, political science, and sociology. Scholarly treatments of sadomasochism, dominance and submission, fetishism, and SM communities now

reflect greater understanding of sexual identity.

But writings on these subjects go back to the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Early materials on sadomasochism and fetishism were written for the most part by psychologists and psychiatrists; literary criticism of the subject dates from the time of the Marquis De Sade. Richard von Krafft-Ebing's 1898 treatise *Psychopathia Sexualis* continues to be cited as a reference guide to sexual classification, despite its rather outmoded nature.

Certain trends emerge from the literature. Early writings were concerned with categorizing what were seen as deviant sexual practices. Writers with a clinical background

in psychology tended to take a non-judgmental position, although they did begin with the assumption that participation in such things as sadomasochism and fetishism reflected some sort of mental defect. The works of Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis are included in this category. Other writers took an even dimmer view, characterizing non-traditional sex as part of a pattern of social deviance. Sigmund Freud's view on the subject is notable given his lasting influence in the field of psychology. Freud classified sadomasochism as one of many pathological manifestations of an unstable upbringing. Psychologists were slow to relinquish this Freudian perspective, and writers who drew conclusions from Freud about society and politics persisted into the latter half of this century to cast non-traditional sexuality in a negative light. Herbert Marcuse's work, along with that of Theodor Reike and Robert Stoller, can be seen in this regard.

It was only after the sexual revolution of the 1960's that scholars from a variety of disciplines took the position that alternative sexuality was simply one of many manifestations of human behavior that should be described and explained without normative judgment.

Scholars writing in the field of psychology continue to produce the majority of literature on sadomasochism and related themes. Among the authors listed in the section on psychology, Roy Baumeister takes the most SM-friendly position. In several recent books and articles, Baumeister classifies masochism as one of a variety of activities that allow people to experience an escape from the self. Baumeister begins with the assumption that the burden of the self has grown especially acute in the modern age. Individuals who



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Practitioners of consensual sadomasochism might be surprised to find that the sub-cultures to which they belong have been studied as if they were aboriginal tribes.

seek a release from daily existence have a variety of escape mechanisms at their disposal, and masochism tends to be a more benign and satisfying one than some other endeavors ... such as substance abuse.

Among the most interesting works are those that approach SM communities from a sociological or anthropological perspective. Practitioners of consensual sadomasochism might be surprised to find that the sub-cultures to which they belong have been studied as if they were aboriginal tribes. A rather sympathetic portrayal of sadomasochistic practices can be found in the works of Thomas Weinberg, whose goal has been to make the variety of SM endeavors known to the larger sociological community. Like the psychologists of the early twentieth century, Weinberg has undertaken to categorize facts of the SM world and to review the range of practices that are common among SM enthusiasts. Similar treatments can be found in under the heading: "*Overviews of SM and Related Issues*".

Many of the resources listed cover topics that do not directly engage BDSM as its practitioners know it, but delve into areas that provide a larger societal and political context for thinking about BDSM activities. One area of inquiry that might initially appear unrelated to issues surrounding BDSM are writings by authors who comment on the political construction of power in society. Works in this field force us to think about how sexuality may become infused with power whether individuals are aware of it or not. The leading figure in this field is French philosopher Michel Foucault who died in 1984. He coined the expression "*power knowledge*" to describe the ways that human relations, are constructed through a discourse that creates and names "regimes" of expected behavior. Readers should also keep in mind that consensual SM and the societal exertion of power can blur around the edges, and therefore works listed under the heading: "*Sex, Society, and Power*" are designed to chal-

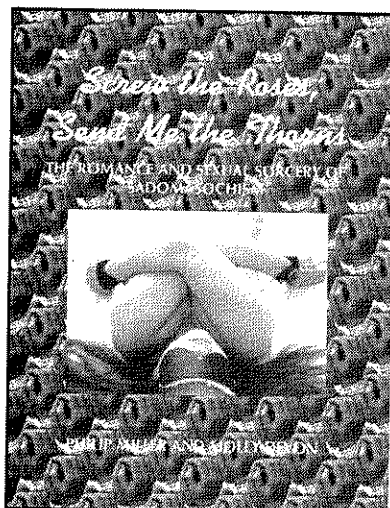
lenge assumptions about the construction of power, just as consensual SM practitioners challenge established societal norms.

Also included under the heading of "*Sex, Society and Power*" are works by authors who have written broadly on topics related to feminism and sexuality. As sexual attitudes in the West have changed, the situation of sexuality with regards to human expression has brought new issues to public awareness at the same time it has challenged ingrained assumptions about gender relations. While the politics of sexuality is not limited to a feminist perspective, these writers force us to address the subtle ways in which consensual BDSM plays with social constructions of power, dominance, and submission.

Keep in mind that some authors use the term "sadomasochism" to mean SM of the non-consensual type. Lynn Hances's book, *Sadomasochism in Everyday Life*, is a good example of a work that maintains that *all* forms of power inequality are inherently abusive and therefore "sadomasochistic".

The works listed in this article are divided into categories reflective of the academic disciplines and traditions to which they roughly correspond.

continued on pg 42



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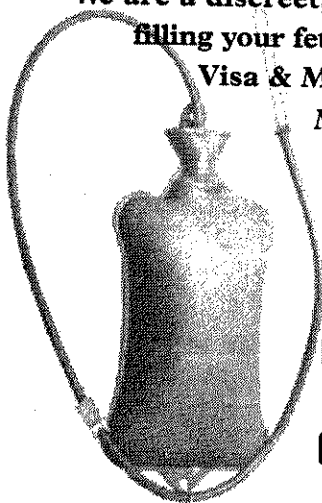
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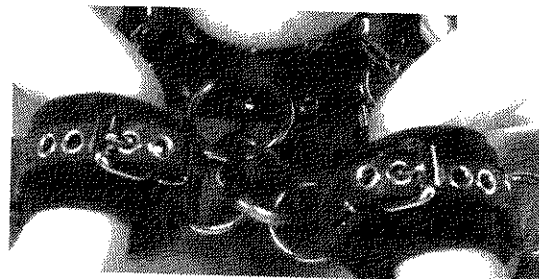
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An Eti-Quiz for Tops, Bottoms ~ ... and those who know them Second of a Series

by Carolyn and Steve Vakesh

In the last issue (#31) we quizzed you on general Party manners. This quiz addresses more specific behavior.

We have witnessed virtually all of these *faux pas* at public play parties and even in our own home.

Tops and Bottoms

1) You approach a slave and begin a conversation with her before learning that she is not allowed to speak. Do you:

a) Keep talking to her anyway assuring her that no one can see and that you won't tell her Mistress?

b) Turn your back on her and walk off to find someone who is allowed to speak with you?

c) Ask her to point out her Mistress so you can ask her to allow you to speak to her?

d) Apologize for your error and leave the slave alone?

e) Apologize and continue to talk to the slave?

2) As a Top, you are approached by a submissive in a collar who wants to play with you. Do you:

a) Ask her to point out her Master so that you can ask permission to play with her?

b) Whip out your toys and start right there?

c) Begin negotiating a scene?

d) Indicate the collar and ask if she needs someone's permission to play?

e) Indicate the collar and gently chastise the slave for *not* getting permission to play with you?

f) Explain that you don't play with collared slaves?

3) You are speaking with a Master/slave couple. The slave leaves to get his Owner a drink. You would also like a drink. Do you

a) Order the slave to get you one too?

b) Ask the slave if he could please get you a drink as well?

c) Ask the Owner if the slave could get you a drink too?

d) Abandon your conversation, accompany the slave, and get yourself a drink?

e) Remember that it takes several days to die of thirst, and decide to wait and get a drink later?

4) You are attracted to someone wearing a collar. How do you ask her to play with you?

a) Ask her to play

b) Ask if she's owned

c) Order her to play with you

d) Ask a friend to ask her to play with you

e) Wander off in search of her Top.

5) You've determined that she is indeed an owned slave, and have tracked down the Owner. How do you ask the slave's owner for permission to play?

a) Wait until the Owner is playing with someone else and then run off with his slave.

b) Compliment him on his slave and ask if you may play with her.

c) Get your more influential friend to ask him to let you play with her.

d) Explain to him that you are overcome with lust for his beautiful slave and are going off to play with her now.

e) Give him your slave in exchange for his.

6) She's cute as hell and you would like a lot more than the normal BDSM scene. Is there a polite way to ask a dominant for permission to bed his owned slave?

a) Yes

b) No

7) You are attracted to another slave's Master. How do you approach the dominant to ask him to play with you?

a) Approach, call him "Sir" and "Master," get him a drink, kneel before him and begin kissing his feet.

b) Ask the slave to ask his Master to play with you.

c) Explain to him that you're much better than his current slave and that you'd like to prove it.

d) Tell him that no one ever plays with you and that you're sad and lonely.

e) Ask him to play with you.

8) You notice that an owned slave is disobeying her Master's standing order. Do you:

a) Tell the Master and urge him to punish her?

b) Discipline the slave yourself?

c) Tell the slave that if she doesn't stop, you will tell her Master?

d) Ignore the situation?

e) Point out to everyone who wanders by what a bad slave she is?

Answers and Scoring:

1. a-0 b-1 c-5 d-3 e-3

2. a-3 b-0 c-3 d-5 e-2 f-1

3. a-0 b-1 c-5 d-3 e-4

4. a-2 b-5 c-0 d-1 e-2

5. a-0 b-5 c-1 d-1 e-2

6. a-0 b-5

7. a-0 b-0 c-1 d-2 e-5

8. a-3 b-0 c-2 d-5 e-0

If you scored:

32-40: To the Manners Born.
You don't need any advice from us.

You handle doms and subs with equal ease.

14-31: Masterful. You usually deal well with doms and subs but some situations are tricky. Just remember, the key to good manners is observation and concern for other people's feelings.

0-13 Down Worm! You need to work on your manners or you might find your BDSM friends don't stop by as much anymore.

1) Answer: While her Mistress's orders apply to her and not to you, you should still do nothing to get her in trouble. As long as only you are talking, there should be no problem. However, you should be sensitive to indications that she may not wish to talk to you at that moment and be unable to say so. Also, keep an eye on her Mistress. Remember, you don't have an automatic right to talk to someone else's property. If her Mistress does not seem concerned, you should be ok. If you sense any indication otherwise, back off.

2) Answer: Collars mean different things to different people. The normal assumption, that this person is submissive and owned or under some form of contract to someone else is often not the case. Many now wear collars to advertise that they bottom, rather than their status as property. For a while a locked collar meant an owned slave, while one that merely buckled meant an unattached bottom, but this never caught on. (At least in part because you could never be certain a lock wasn't concealed under long hair.) Similarly a padlocked chain indicates slave status to some people, but this too is often worn by the unowned. A small, but growing, number of people sport collars merely as fashion accoutrements and

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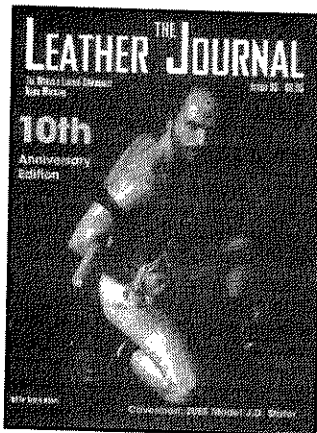
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Etiquiz, Part II

take them on and off with same nonchalance as they would any jewelry. In the BDSM community you are always safer asking if he/she needs permission.

Never assume.

3) **Answer:** Unless permission has been given, you have no right to order someone else's slave to do anything for you! You have to ask the Owner. Simply lean over and ask, "Could he bring a drink back for me also?" And a courteous owner will, of course, say yes.

4) **Answer:** The collar probably means she's submissive, but you have no idea if she's owned. Regardless, it doesn't mean she's community property no matter how much fun that might be. The best course of action is to ask if she needs permission before playing and if not, would she enjoy playing with you. If she is

continued from pg 45

owned, you will need to find her owner and ask permission before playing with her. It is perfectly acceptable to ask the slave to point out her owner.

5) **Answer:** You have to ask, and you have to ask for yourself. How else can your worthiness be judged?

6) **Answer:** No! In our society and in the age of AIDS, there is simply no polite way to ask this of relative strangers. Sex may be offered, but never demanded or even asked for. You can politely indicate your interest if it should be offered.

7) **Answer:** In the swing community couples go to parties to play with other people. In the BDSM community couples go to parties to play with other people's toys and equipment. Many will probably play with others as well, but you should-

n't approach them for a scene until they've had a chance to play together first. When you do, keep it simple, and don't initiate a scene (i.e. kiss feet, etc.) until a scene is actually agreed to. Also, you might want to discreetly check on the slave's feelings.

The smart, polite BDSMer doesn't interfere with other people's relationships.

8) **Answer:** Most people learned in kindergarten that no one appreciates a snitch, but some people never learn. One of the strangest things about living 24/7 is the number of people who come up and *demand* you punish your slave! In essence they're trying to manipulate your relationship to provide them with the entertainment they're not getting at home. Ignore the situation unless you know from previous experience with this couple that your involvement is welcome. ♦

Still to come: Recovering from *Faux Pax*, and Telephone Manners.

Joy of Topping

won't continue Topping if she tries to push me into it. I like to express my sadism in a way that is clean and fiery, not clouded by anger and resentment. Indeed, I will stop the scene, at least for a while, until my anger has receded.

Another situation that can arise, since this is not an ideal world, is a medical emergency. Try to avoid this scenario by asking the bottom to volunteer any information about medical conditions they may have. As for fainting, there are certain circumstances which can make it a likely occurrence. A bottom who has not eaten all day and whose blood-sugar is consequently low, put in tight

continued from pg 31

bondage, particularly with arms raised above his head, especially if the genitals are also bound, might easily pass out. The likelihood is increased if the bottom tries to be stoic and push through feelings of faintness. This is a time when you will be glad you used quick-release panic snaps, and that you have your EMT scissors handy to cut ropes, if need be.

Obviously, any emergency must be dealt with immediately, since safety comes first. A few years back, during the San Francisco Earthquake that destroyed part of the Bay Bridge, I had a young lawyer spread-eagled, face-down, on my bondage table. As



I was whipping him, I noticed the room beginning to rock. An Act of the Goddess! The lights went out. His concern was that I remove the collar encircling his neck! My concern was to get us both out of the dungeon as quickly as possible, which I did in the dark. Since then, I have an emergency lighting system in my play space. The Goddess, thankfully, has been a little calmer in recent years.

So, for a number of reasons, physical or psychological, a scene can break down. The bottom can get panicked, and you cannot get her to calm down, refocus, and regain trust. You, as a Top, might feel frustrated, angered, or disempowered, and lose confidence and interest. There is all kinds of space here for people to get

emotionally hurt. My advice is to stay calm and stop the scene. Give yourself and your bottom time to cool down. However, do make sure that at a later time, that day or that week, you make time to communicate to each other what happened and to decide where to take your play relationship from then on.

Lately, in all the classes I teach, I have been pointing out that no matter how much work the whole SM community has done in the last ten years in promoting the credo of "Safe, Sane and Consensual," BDSM still involves a level of risk, which is

in fact central to it and makes it exciting. This can sometimes be difficult and painful, but it is also what allows us to soar. Facing and meeting the many challenges of Topping can bring us great joys which we would not be able to reach any other way: Personal and spiritual growth, deeper intimacy with our partners, savoring the richness of our sexuality, our power, our vulnerability, and exploring the limits of our erotic potential, are just some of the rewards of bravely honoring our kinkiness.

(Married to the Fakir Musafar and living in SF. Ms Cleo can be reached at: CleoDubois@sm-arts.com)



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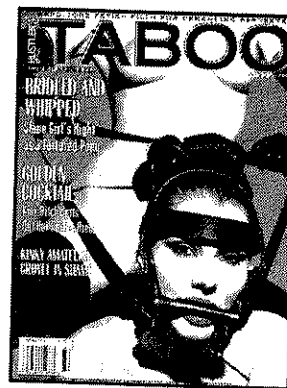
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WELL, IF THEY CAN MAKE QUASIMODO DANCE...?



LETTERS TO ADAM AND GILLIAN

Thank you for producing quality products for the general masses to use and enjoy. Although I have not been active in this for long I have heard absolutely nothing but excellent reviews for yourselves and the products you produce.

I am writing for technical advice. I am interested in receiving a schoolboy caning. It must be a very effective behavior-changing experience, but it will be administered by someone with little caning experience. I am searching for a product that I can put into my briefcase so it must be small, discreet but VERY effective. If you don't feel a cane is appropriate please make an alternate suggestion. It must be effective on school shorts, undershorts and especially on bare bottom. it *must sting* but not leave serious lasting markings.

Can you help?

Dale P.

Gillian replied:

If it has to fit into a briefcase, I sug-

gest either the **Little Cane**, 24" long in Black nylon with a crook handle like the SchoolMaster. The other is the **White Lightnin'**, a polyethylene rod about 20" long in a nylon-wrapped handle.

For something completely different, consider a strap. We have several: the **Big Brother**, single length of harness leather, 22" long and 2.5" wide. Or, the **Doubled Strap**, either 16" or 24" long and 2.5" wide. The new **Scottish Taws** is another interesting choice, either in the longer or shorter length.

I am in search of an item which will leave marks for a week, but will not cause deep bruising ... need a recommendation.

Adam Replied:

Making long lasting welts without some bruises is a bit of a challenge. And it's going to depend as much on the age, heredity and diet of the subject as anything else - including the whipper's skill.

Your best bet would be the long-handled, thin tress cats: the **Viper** and the **Flagellarium**. If you can tolerate some skin breakage. If that is a no-no, round rubber tresses tend to leave the skin unbroken, and do not make bruises easily. The question is whether the welts will last a week.

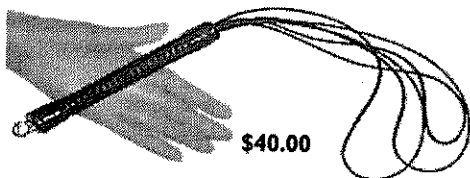
And on a non-technical level:

A little over a year ago you traded correspondence with a confused and frustrated man, who knew his sexuality, but had no idea where to go or what to do —the music of, "I'm sane, but everyone else who does this is a drooling monster," tune playing loudly in his head. You lead him to (an organization) and his life blossomed.

Since that time I have met many people, learned how to play *properly*, (!), managed to integrate my "kink" into a facet of who I am rather than a overweening obsession, and met a lovely woman who is in fact my soulmate. "Thanks for leading me ..." is meager repayment, but know you have my deep gratitude.

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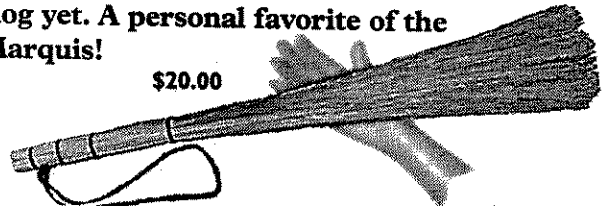
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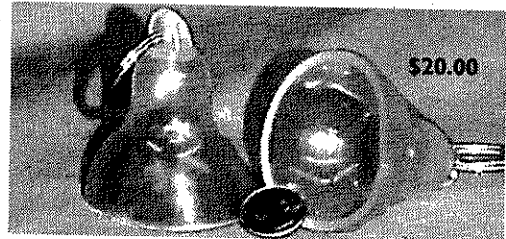
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"... but we don't take American Express!"

IMHO Dungeon Monitors

stopped just so the DM can revel in his duly-appointed authority.

In my own experience DMs also serve one other increasingly-important function. Some people have embraced the SSC credo a bit too deeply. Left to themselves they would run amok, interfering with scenes and hassling the participants about their safety practices. Novice DMs tend to fall into their trap and help them shut down scenes. Experienced DMs are usually able to function as a lightning rod and keep them from ruining everyone's fun. Last time I DMed, two earnest people ran up to me complaining that a couple in the corner was not using latex gloves. I wandered over and observed the malefactors at play, and indeed I couldn't determine if the Top was using a glove—his hand, or rather arm, was up his friend's ass well past the point a glove would have helped! I left them alone.

Most events don't need DMs. My own local play club has operated

for some time without DMs and without incident. Responsible adults can be left to themselves without worry. If you *absolutely can't stop worrying* and have to have some safeguard, an event specific safeword is all that is needed. Everyone knows it stops the scene. If people see that a scene hasn't stopped after the safeword was called, they'll intervene and stop it. If you don't trust the people you party with to help you when you call your safeword, you probably shouldn't be playing with them in the first place.

So, don't have DMs. If you find yourself at an event that has them, ignore them — or if you're like me, screw with them. It's like getting two scenes for the price of one. Here's what you do. DMs never stop a scene suddenly. They'll watch for a while, slowly working up their courage to hassle you, and slowly edging closer. Encourage this. Once you've caught a DM's eye, increase the intensity of your play. It's easy to

look more reckless and less careful than you actually are, and it's often more fun for the bottom. As the DMs move even closer, sensing that you are one of those "dangerous" people they were warned about, draw them in closer still. Just as you see the gleam of determination in their eyes, drop your implements of pain and begin doing something soft and sensual. The DMs will decide everything is OK and back away (the experienced ones will go away completely). Then go back to doing something intense and dangerous-looking which will once again suck them into your personal space. It's actually amazing how long you can keep this up with some DMs before they finally figure it out and wander off to hassle someone else. It is also rather interesting how well this cycle matches the common cycle in BDSM play in which the top ramps up sensation to the where the bottom can barely tolerate it, eases off to let him/her recover, and then builds up again. The sad thing is this is as close to participation in a scene that some of these DMs will ever get. **Pity them. ♦**

TED WHINERBOTTOM: (THEN AND NOW) — K.D. Pierre



What Are Dungeon Monitors Good for Anyway?

by Steve Vakesh

While many people have complained increasingly of the way the credo of "Safe, Sane, and Consensual" has been used to censor and limit activity, little has been said about the pernicious growth of the institution of Dungeon Monitor and its use to limit consensual activity. Events used to have one or two DMs; now they have gaggles of them. A St. Louis event last April, for example, had at least 20 DMs on duty at any given time for their 30 play stations! It would be only a slight exaggeration to say that there were often more DMs in the play area than people playing. I've seen the same philosophy at other events: if one or two DMs is a good idea, than a dozen or more is even better.

This is utter nonsense. Obviously a bar, play club, or other place of business that would be vulnerable to liability lawsuits need DMs, but the vast majority of BDSM gatherings and play parties do not. And they certainly don't need them in quantity.

Over the past few years DMs have become increasingly intrusive, breaking up scenes over trivia. A friend of mine was scolded by a DM in the middle of a scene because she didn't like the way he removed needles from their caps. Some DMs at a Chicago event a few years ago honestly believed that women couldn't tolerate anything heavier than deer-skin floggers and broke up several scenes when the Tops brought out the heavy artillery. I've seen DMs at several events stop scenes simply

because they were heavier than what that DM played himself. St. Louis' DMs were especially active. While I didn't see them actually stop scenes (I'm told they did), they did scold Tops in the middle of scenes, stand intrusively close to scene participants, harass people who were only quietly watching, clear out play stations their friends wanted to use, and generally made a nuisance of themselves. While I was in the middle of a quiet, scene-related conversation with a friend who was playing (he wanted to borrow a whip), one DM tapped me on a shoulder to warn me that a person twenty feet away from me was about to use a four foot single-tail and that I should be careful. Other friends were interrupted during scenes with similar warnings. Certainly some of the DMs knew their stuff, Molly Devon (the co-author of *Screw the Roses, Send Me the Thorns*) for instance pulled a shift, but most of them acted like power-mad grade school hall monitors. The DMing at this event was certainly the worst I've ever seen, but I think that had more to do with their quantity than their quality. Their behavior is increasingly becoming the norm.

While it would make sense for the most experienced people to be made DMs, this rarely happens. Experienced people tend to have full dance cards and usually have to be dragged kicking and screaming into small, dark rooms where DM arm bands are forcibly fastened to them. Even then, experienced people usually manage to get scheduled as DMs either in the first shift, when hardly anything ever happens, or the last

shifts when they're exhausted from their own scenes and too tired to know what's going on. DMs then, tend to be the least experienced people, or at least those least able to find play partners. Also, the more DMs you have at an event, the lower their average experience will be.

This brings up the obvious question: what are these DMs supposed to be doing? The usual response is that they're there to keep people from being hurt. With more than a decade of events under my belt, I have to say that I have never once seen a DM stop someone from being hurt. I've seen them break up a whole lot of scenes that were going just fine, but I've never seen them stop a scene that actually needed to be stopped.

In my own experience, the leading cause of non-consensual injuries at events isn't incompetent tops, but equipment failure: benches collapse, chains part, snaps break, screw eyes tear out of ceilings, restraints discombobulate. These types of accidents (and they're far more common than they should be) are best prevented by testing equipment beforehand, not hoping a DM will be wandering by just in time to notice that a weld has popped on one of the links in a twenty foot length of chain!

So if DMs aren't keeping people safe, what are they doing? DMs seem to serve two real purposes: 1) they reassure novices. "See, nothing can go wrong because there's a DM here to watch over you." And 2) They give control freaks who don't have bottoms of their own something to do, and a way to play with power. Neither of these is a particularly good thing. The former gives bottoms a false sense of security. The latter guarantees that scenes will be

Writer's Guidelines -- for *THE SANDMUTOPIAN GUARDIAN* a Journal of BDSM Realities

The *Guardian* is first and foremost a practical guide to safe and enjoyable exotic eroticism. Think of it as a combination of *Popular Mechanics*™ and *Consumer's Digest*™ for kinky sex. Our ambition is to become the independent "Journal of Record" of BDSM. Our readership includes people of *all* sexual orientations, gender identities and power polarities. While readers' experience levels range from, "just thinking about it," to "lifestyle devotee," we want to be especially mindful of, and useful to, the *less* experienced reader.

The Guardian is not following anyone's Party Line nor is it aligned with any particular demographic sub-grouping. We *will not refuse* a piece because of the "political" point of view it reflects or (to the limit of Statutory Libel) because "someone" will "be offended."

We take the broadest possible view of what constitutes appropriate material

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*RELATIONSHIPS *ROLES *SCENARIOS,

*TECHNIQUES *CRAFTS and SKILLS

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Almost anything touching on BDSM, Fetish, Power Exchange, might be a successful article. We also buy "filler" pieces: humorous anecdotes, tips and hints, cartoons, etc..

Work can be submitted typewritten, or as an ASCII file in PC or MAC format, or in an email message. Please **do not send** text formatted in a program. (eg. Word, Word Perfect)

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We buy one-time serial rights with a one-time reprint provision. Payment is on acceptance, and we try to respond to all submissions within sixty days. SASE required for return.

Style and Content: Factual material, organized sequentially is the first concern, "style" is a bonus. Remember the "5 W's" of Journalism: Who, What, Where, When, and hoW — the "How to Write a Good Term Paper" handbooks? That's the idea.

Citations are Good. If you reference a product or publication, there should be an address and/or phone number, too. Appended Resource Lists are always welcome.

It is probably better to put too many words on paper, than to skip over "the obvious." Clarifying illustration, even crude hand drawings, is always useful.

About "PC Language": Writers needn't feel that they have to obscure their own orientations, alignments or biases — and gender specific pronouns *are* used when a specific person's gender is known, or gender is relevant. Otherwise, we like a style which de-emphasizes gender, polarity, and orientation. We have no problem with the "he/she, her/him" style used in government documents, the "false plural" form, or even the made up pronouns like "(s)he" and "co." Please be mindful that half of humanity is *not* male and at least 10% of it is *not* heterosexual. Try for inclusiveness.

About "Safety" : We assume that our readers are adults and that we, and they, reached maturity by not being "stupid or reckless." *The Guardian* focuses on the pleasure and sensual nature of BDSM and *less* on the dangers, perils and negatives of BDSM play. If there are some safety or health issues not readily apparent, they may need to be included. But we will not belabor the obvious.

DEADLINES:

The next issue is #33 with a deadline in mid-March for April publication. If you have an article that you want to be considered for this issue, call or write to let us know — the sooner the better.

If you miss the deadline, we will still be buying and paying as we go. In effect, we've got to worry about deadlines ... you can just work to your own schedule.

ARTWORK AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Artists and illustrators are invited to send samples of their work by way of self-introduction. Almost all illustration will be commissioned for particular articles. Possible cover art, centerfold photo-essays and folios will be considered on their own merits. We want to project enjoyment, respect, safe-and-sane practice, and consensuality — or at least *not* communicate the reverse.

We are **not** in the market for "eye candy," rigid bondage/genitorture studies or depictions of atrocities. Work may be submitted in MAC or WINDOWS disk formats. If photographs are accepted, we may ask to use the negative for proper reproduction — and, of course, Model Releases in keeping with the law.

The Factual, Practical Journal of BDSM Realities.

In Issue #30, we celebrated our 10th Anniversary of *The Guardian* with a special section devoted to: "The Way We Were," as told by the original Editors, Publisher and contributors ... plus all our regular features, including Flogging, How to find a Houseboy, Plaster Casting, Vampire Fangs, Libel Laws ...

In Issue #31, readers read about the use of the voice in scene, continued to learn more about Flogging, saw how to Hide a Dungeon, how to Soundproof it, took an Eti-Quiz, kept up with legal cases ... and more!

In addition to feature articles, each issue of *The Guardian* carries: Book, CD or Video Reviews, S/Mart Shopper hints, Unexpected Sources for BDSM Toys, s/m-oriented News and Ads from the Mainstream, called "We Can't Make These Things Up!, Letters from readers ... and so much more!

(It does NOT have: fiction, fantasy or poetry. And, NO "eye-candy" pix of hunks or babes just to fill space!)

Some of the other topics explored in previous issues:

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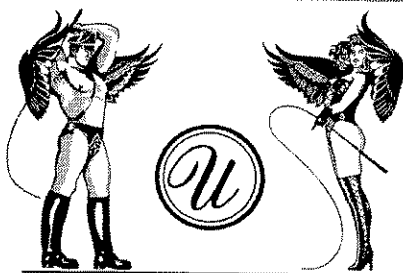
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